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Wrestling with

G O D

And Prevailing :

Or a Treatise concerning the
Necessity and Efficacy of Faith

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P R A Y E R .

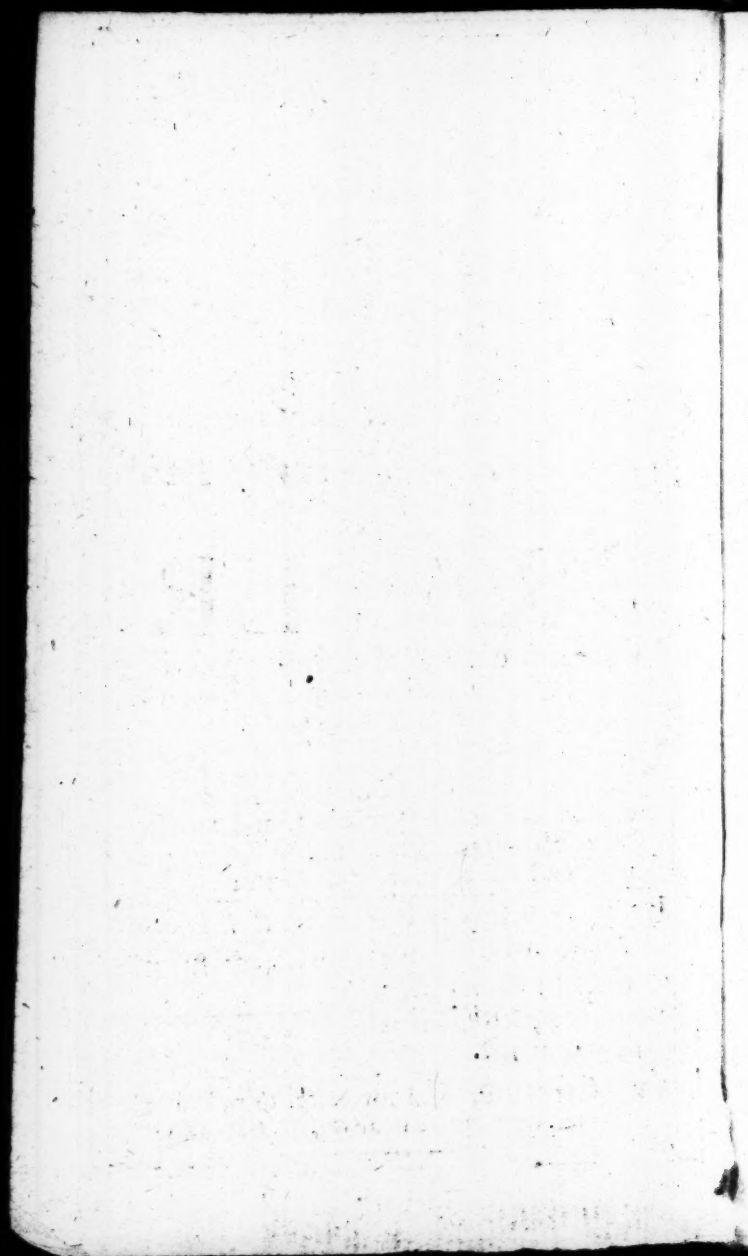
Wherein divers weighty Questions
and Cases of Conscience about Praying in
Faith, are stated and resolved.

For the comforting and satisfying of
weak and scrupulous Consciences: The Con-
viction of formal Hypocrites, and awaken-
ing of all Saints, both weak and strong, great
and small, to this great duty of Prayer.

By *Thomas Taylor* formerly at *Edmunds
Bury*, now Pastor to a Congrega-
tion in *Cambridge*.

*John 16. 24. Ask, and ye shall receive, that your
joy may be full.*

L O N D O N , Printed for *Nath. Crouch* at the
Bell in the *Poultry* near *Cheapside*. 1692.



T O T H E

R E A D E R.

WHoever thou art that takest this Book into thy hand, know, that asto thy Spiritual State, thou art either a Sinner, or a Saint; a Believer, or an Unbeliever; in Christ, or out of Christ; for betwixt these there is no *Medium*, or middle state, *Joh. 3. 36. 1 Joh. 5. 12.*

Now if thou beest a sinner, an unbelieving Christless Soul,

Then here is the root of all thy spiritual misery (which is great beyond expression) and the bar, that keeps out all spiritual good and mercy from thy Soul, that thou art at a distance, and estranged from communion, the sweet, and Soul-enriching, Soul-sanctifying, Soul-saving, and Soul-satisfying Communion of Jesus Christ,

To the Reader.

Christ, *Job.* 17. 3. which is the Life of Grace, the Life of Glory, the Life of God! *Ephes.* 4. 18. *Alienated from the Life of God.*

And this is thy Hell upon Earth, though thou knowest it not; that thou art without God, and without Christ in the World, *Eph.* 2. 12. *i. e.* without true Spiritual enjoyment of God, and Jesus Christ, through want of the life and exercise of Faith in thy Soul, and through a sinful neglect, or a mis-performance, as of all other holy duties, so especially of this great duty of Prayer; in the constant and right performance whereof, such sweet and blessed communion with God may be enjoyed; as *Galeatius Caracciolus*, that famous *Italian Convert* (having tasted the sweetness thereof in his own Soul, and having forsaken all that was dear to him in the World upon that account) was wont to say; *That he was not worthy the name of a Christian, that did not prize one moments Communion with God before a thousand Worlds!* Now

To the Reader.

Now Reader, know, that if thou beest such a one as art yet a stranger to Communion with God ; it is one design of this following Treatise, to lead thee unto the Father, by the Son, and to instruct thee into this great duty and mystery of Praying in Faith, which if the Lord shall give thee rightly to understand, and wisely to improve, will open such a door for escape out of thy Spiritual misery, and for the letting in of all Spiritual mercies and blessings into thy Soul, as may make thee happy to all Eternity.

If thou beest a Saint, a Believer, a Soul in Christ, then to enjoy communion with him is thy life, thy glory, thy joy, thy crown, thy heaven upon earth, *Psal.* 37. 25. *Cant.* 1. 2. *Psf.* 63. 1, 2, 3, 5. nothing so sweet, nothing so precious, nothing so desireable to thy Soul, as communion and fellowship with the Father and his Son Jesus Christ, through the Spirit, and in the constant and right use and performance

To the Reader.

formance of these Heavenly Ordinances, and Holy Duties, which are the sweet walks of Jesus Christ, *Rev.* 1. 13. wherein he delights to communicate himself to the Souls of his people; And those Spiritual Galleries, *Can.* 7. 5. in which the King is held and retained by his beloved Spouse, *Cant.* 4. 9. in most sweet embraces, *Cant.* 2. 4. and Soul-endearing converses, to ravishing of the Hearts of each other.

Amongst which Spiritual Walks and Galleries, there is none in which Jesus Christ doth more delight, and abundantly communicate himself to the Souls of his people, than in this great ordinance of prayer, which is therefore called his delight. *Prov.* 15. 8.

Now 'tis also the design and scope of this Treatise, to further thy Souls communion with Jesus Christ in this Ordinance of Prayer, by shewing thee

1. The Necessity.

2. The

To the Reader.

2. The Efficacy of Faith in Prayer.

Resolving divers Scruples, and Cases of Conscience about it.

Awakening and stirring up thy Soul to it, teaching thee to be Spiritual and Heavenly in it, and revealing unto thee the great and glorious things that may be done and obtained by it.

Therefore whether thou beest Sinner or Saint, in Christ, or out of Christ, strong or weak in Grace, read this small Treatise; and the Lord give thee to understand what thou readest; sincerely to imbrace, and faithfully to practice what thou understandest, and to reap the Spiritual Fruit thereof in Grace here, and Glory hereafter: And if thou Reapest any Fruit and Benefit to thy Soul by this discourse, give him the Glory, who is the Author of Truth, not the Instrument. And if thou Reapest no

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Fruit,

To the Reader.

Fruit, or beeft made worſe by it,
blame neither the Author, nor the
Inſtrument, but thine own Heart as
the cauſe of it.

Tho. Taylor.

To

TO THE READER.

By a Friend of the Authors.

THis ensuing treatise was put into my hand, by the worthy Author thereof, whose humility was jealous of the publication of this piece ; By a cursory view of it, I quickly perceived the Spirit of it, and prest to the publishing of it, for the relief, quickening, and consolation of such as understand praying in the Holy Ghost. And do therefore think meet to acquaint you that the Author of this treatise of prayer, is well known to be a judicious, and faithful Minister of God, and Servant of Jesus Christ, who hath witnessed a good confession, and that in bonds, for the Commandments of God, and the Testimony of Jesus. In which condition, no doubt,

To the Reader.

his Soul was conversant in this Heavenly exercise, and was taken, (as others of his fellow servants,) into a more intimate Communion with Jesus Christ, whose breathings and cries, with others of his brethren, are gone up into the ears of the Lord of Hosts, Psal. 97. 11.

The Accuser of the Brethren hath great wrath against the Spirit of Prayer, in this Hour, and hath blasphemed it at the highest rate that ever was heard of in any generation, being greatly tormented thereat, crying out, Oh, Away with this praying in the Spirit. Wonderful it is, that men pretending Christianity, and to have read the Holy Scriptures, should decry praying in the Spirit, (which is perfectly opposed to stinted forms) but that the way of the Spirit in the Hearts of the called of God, is foolishness even to the wise and learned that know it not.

*The Author of this Book, as a good witness of Jesus Christ, hath given out a holy and experimental Testimony to this Spirit of Prayer, and hath discovered
the*

To the Reader.

the abomination of Hypocritical praying, in the vain repetitions and saying long prayers for a pretence, Mat. 6. 7. and 23. 14. to juggle out the Spirit of Prayer, promised to all Ministers sent by Jesus Christ, and all Saints, especially in the New Testament days. If this therefore come into the hands of any prayerless Souls, know thou art yet without the Spirit, and so art none of Jesus Christs, Rom. 8. 9. Where-ever the Spirit of Grace is, it is a Spirit of Prayer, Zach. 12. 10. Dost thou feel the guilt of sin, the want of pardon, peace, grace, holiness, thou wouldst not need the words of others to help thee in praying, but thou wouldst know what it is for the Spirit to help (the proper and only help in prayer) thy infirmities, and couldst be no more satisfied with dry and empty forms, than a hungry man with Air.

If thou art a weak doubting Soul, and complainedst of an unbelieving heart, (which is a good symptome) here thou mayest meet with plain and spiritual resolves,

To the Reader.

solvesto thy doubts, about the acceptance of thy Prayer, and the looking for answers thereof, and what Faith thou art to exercise on promises in order thereunto.

Tea all Saints may be further instructed in the efficacy and prevalency of Prayer, and to be encouraged that the Lord will not cast off a praying Generation that cry day and night unto him. The Lord hasten to pour forth the Spirit of Light and Prayer upon his people, and upon the world, as the best sign of his own approaching to judge the Earth. In the waiting for which, let all that have received the first fruits thereof be found at this day; To which expectation, Reader I commend thee, and this Spiritual Treatise to thy perusal, and it, and thy self to the blessing made over to the Seed of Jacob, that wrestle it out with God, and prevail over him. The Saints do in a sense, govern the World with Jesus Christ already, by the Spirit of Prayer that is in them, making intercession in them according to
Christs

To the Reader.

Christs intercession in Heaven, and usually we may know what God is about to do in the World by the Prayers of his Saints, especially in this last age of the World, when their Souls travel and are in pangs for Sions Redemption, and the Earth quake to come into the Nations of the World, till all the foundations of it, (as laid for the interest of Babylon and Antichristianism) are shaken and out of course, which the Lord will hasten in his time. But I must break off, and bespeak thy Prayers for the Author and my self, and all the Lords afflicted Ministers, that are mourning in corners, resting,

Thy Servant for Jesus sake,

Anthony Palmer.

Postscript.

Postscript.

THis small Treatise, was written soon after the year 1660. and the great Revolutions that were then, and have happened since, do abundantly verify many things contained therein, though the great Truths manifested in this Book, were not calculated for any particular time, but are of perpetual, as well as universal use and concernment.

T. T.

Jacob



Jacob wrestling with God, and prevailing.

Matthew 21. 22.

And all things whatsoever ye shall ask in Prayer believing, ye shall receive.

THIS Text is brought in as an *Epiphonema* or Closing speech to the History of the fruitless Fig-tree, which being cursed by Jesus Christ for its barrenness, presently withers, and is dried up, *v. 19.* to the great admiration of the Disciples, *v. 20.* which action, as it was extraordinary and miraculous in its self, so in the tendency thereof it was of extraordinary use to the Disciples, and did carry along with it a double instruction.

First, To beware of an out-side formal Profession, without spiritual fruit, and a suitable Conversation, which is alway attended

attended with the wrath and displeasure of God, and is nigh unto cursing, *Heb. 6. 8.*

Secondly, To teach the great Efficacy and Power of Faith, and what great things may be done thereby, either extraordinary, according to that dispensation of working Miracles, which was but for the time present, and peculiar to some, *verse 21.* for all had not this gift, nor Faith of Miracles, *1 Cor. 12. 29, 30.*

2. Or else ordinary, according to the gift and force of Prayer, which is perpetual and common to all the Saints, by which they have a constant and joynt access to the Throne of Grace in all causes whatsoever, and may accordingly prevail with God, provided they pray in Faith, as in the Text. *And all things whatsoever, &c.*

In this Text of Scripture there are two things principally taught and commended to our consideration.

1. The Necessity } of Faith in Prayer.
2. The Efficacy }

The first, *viz.* The Necessity of Faith in Prayer, is gathered from the word [*Believing*] which is brought in as a specific

essential and qualifying adjunct, or necessary ingredient to all our prayers. *And all things whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer believing, ye shall receive.*

The Necessity of Faith in Prayer, is also gathered from other Texts of Scripture, as *Heb. 11. 6. But without Faith it is impossible to please God; for he that cometh to God must believe, &c.* And again, *Jam. 1. 5, 6. If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, &c. But let him ask in Faith.* And look, as the Body without the Soul is dead and useles, and cannot perform the actions of a man: So also Prayer without Faith, is dead and unprofitable, *James 1. 6, 7, 8.* So that Faith is the Soul and Life of Prayer, and therefore a necessary ingredient thereto.

I Question, or Case of Conscience.

But what kind of Faith is that which is so necessarily and indispensibly required in all our Prayers to God? Is it the Faith of Assurance, or the Faith of Reliance? Seeing James saith, it must be without wavering, and in nothing doubting. Therefore it would seem that there is required in all our Prayers to God, a Faith of Assurance, yea, of full and perfect Assurance, which admits of

no doubting or uncertainty of the mind in the thing asked, and that a Faith of Reliance is not sufficient, seeing that is always attended with some doubting, as in Esther, [If I perish, I perish;] she relied upon God in the use of means, but yet was doubtful as to the success and event thereof. Now if this Faith be not accepted in Prayer, then the Prayers of most of the Children of God are ineffectual, seeing most of them have not the Faith of Assurance.

That saying of the holy man James, shall be cleared in its proper place.

Answ. But in answer to the Question, it is affirmed, That although it be the duty of all Christians to press after the Faith of Assurance, as that which tendeth exceedingly to their comfort and inward joy; yet where there is a Faith of Reliance, *i. e.* the heart doth inwardly rest upon God's Almsufficiency, Mercy, Faithfulness, Truth, &c. yet with doubting and uncertainty of the mind, whether the thing shall be done which is asked of God in Prayer; the Prayer is accepted of God, and shall certainly have a gracious return in due time.

But that we may be the more clear and distinct in our handling this Point, to the satisfaction and comfort of weak and

and scrupulous Consciences ; we shall first give a brief description of these two kinds of Faith, in their distinct and different Natures ; that so the person who is scrupulous may the better judge of his Faith, of what kind it is : And then we shall by Scripture and Experience make good our Assertion, *viz.* that a Faith of Reliance is accepted of God in Prayer, where the Faith of Assurance is wanting.

Faith of Assurance described.

The Faith of Assurance therefore is a full Persuasion and certain Assurance of the mind of a Believer, of the thing asked or hoped for, grounded upon the clear and infallible Testimony of the Word and Spirit of God in their joyned witness, *Heb. 10. 22. 1 John 5. 13, 14, 15. 1 John 5. 6. Rom. 8. 16.*

Faith of Reliance described.

The Faith of Reliance is the inward resting of the heart upon God, his Name and Attributes, *viz.* his Power, Wisdom, Mercy, Faithfulness, Truth, &c. for the performance of his Word and Promise in general, without any certainty or Assurance

rance of the mind, with application thereof to its self in special, wanting the particular Witness and Testimony of the Spirit in the case, which always is present in the Faith of Assurance, but always absent and wanting in this Faith of Reliance, *Psal. 37. 7. Jonah 3. 8, 9. Esther 4. 16. Job 13. 15. Dan. 3. 17, 18.*

Of this kind was the Faith of the Leper, *Matth. 8. 2. [Lord, if thou wilt thou canst make me clean]* There was a Reliance upon the Power of Christ to do the thing asked, but a doubtfulness or uncertainty of the mind as touching the application of that ability and healing Power to himself in particular. And therefore he puts it with an if; [*Lord, if thou wilt*] speaking of his particular and secret will in the case propounded, which was not yet made known, and therefore he might without sin doubt of it: But as to his general will and infinite readiness to heal the Sick, cleanse the Lepers, &c. which was abundantly revealed and made known both by Scripture and Experience, he could not have doubted thereof, without great sin; and so would consequently have been reprov'd for it.

Thus having described these two kinds of Faith, in their distinct and different

rent Natures, whereby every one that cometh unto God by Prayer, may be able to judge of himself, and know what kind of Faith it is, that he comes withall. We shall proceed to make good the Assertion; viz.

Affer. That a Faith of Reliance is accepted with God in Prayer, where a Faith of Assurance is wanting. Proved,

1. By Scripture, 2 Cor. 8. 12. *It is accepted according to what a man hath, and not according to what he hath not.* The general equity and force of which Rule reacheth not only unto the case of Alms; to which the Apostle doth there apply it, but also unto all other cases wherein we have to do with God, and particularly unto this case of Prayer, for otherwise God should seem to be a hard Master, reaping where he hath not sown, and gathering where he hath not strowed, and expecting to receive, where he hath not first given, which cannot at any time, nor in any case be justly said of him, who is infinite in mercy, and with whom there is no unrighteousness all whose commands are equal and reasonable. And who receiveth not from his creature,
but

but according to the gift of his own grace which he hath first bestowed, *Rom. 11.35* [*or who hath first given to him?*] Now forasmuch as Faith is not of our selves, but is in an especial manner the gift of God, who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will, and planteth in the hearts of his People different kinds and measures of grace, according to his own good pleasure, and the use he intends to make of them: It remains, that where the Lord hath wrought a Faith of Reliance in the hearts of his people, to whom he hath not given the Faith of Assurance; And they come to him in Prayer, and in the use of all holy means which he hath appointed for the good of their souls, with such a Faith as himself hath wrought in them; he doth graciously accept them according to what they have, and not according to what they have not.

2. By Experience; and this also is manifest by the common and constant experience of the Saints, who when they have so come to God in Prayer, with a Faith of Adherence, where Assurance hath been wanting, have been graciously accepted of the Lord, and received a gracious answer of such Prayers.

1. *Instance.* As in the case of the Leper above-mentioned, *Mat. 8. 2, 3.* who when he came to Christ in Prayer, only in a Faith of Reliance upon his power to help, when as he had no assurance of his particular will and purpose as to himself, and therefore puts an if upon that; [*Lord if thou wilt thou canst make me clean*] was graciously accepted of the Lord, and obtained a speedy and full answer of that prayer, in the very thing he asked, *verse 3.* [*And Jesus put forth his hand, and touched him, saying, (I will) be thou clean, and immediately his Leprosie was cleansed.*]

2. *Instance.* And so likewise in the case of the Woman of *Canaan*, *Mat. 15. 22, 29.* who came to Christ in Prayer on the behalf of her afflicted daughter, *v. 22.* *Saying, Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou Son of David, my Daughter is grievously vexed with a Devil.* Now here was wrought in this Woman (though a *Canaanite*, a stranger, an alien from the Common-wealth of *Israel*) a mighty Faith of Reliance, by which she did marvelously cling to Jesus the Son of *David*, relying upon his mercy, and power, to help her, though she had no certain assurance, that she should have her petition granted;

granted; but many discouraging passages from Christ. As,

First, His silence to her Prayer, answering her not a word, *v. 23.*

Secondly, His seeming denial of her request, with this reason against it; *That he was not sent, save to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, verse 24.*

Thirdly, His upbraiding her with her stock and generation; being descended of the cursed stock and generation of the *Canaanites*, in respect whereof he calls her a Dog, *v. 26.* by all which it is most clear, she neither had, nor could have any assurance, but only she exerciseth her Faith of Reliance, notwithstanding all difficulties and discouragements, and still she Prays, and Worships the Son of *David*, confessing her own vileness and unworthiness, and justifying the Lord in calling her Dog, and taking advantage thereupon to hope that yet there might be some crumbs of mercy for her, *v. 27.* *Truth Lord, yet the Dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their Masters Table.* And at length with this Faith she prevails, and hath a full answer of her Petition, with a high commendation of her Faith, *verse 28.* *Then Jesus answered and said unto her, O Woman, great is thy Faith! be it unto*

unto thee even as thou wilt : And her Daughter was made whole the same hour. ' And so much by way of answer to the first Question.

2. Question or Case of Conscience.

But whether is it sufficient to have the habit and being of Faith in the heart when we Pray ? or is the exercise and acting of Faith necessarily required also ?

Ans. That it is not sufficient to have the habit and being of Faith in the Heart when we pray, but the exercise and actuality of our Faith is required in our addresses to God by Prayer : 'tis not enough that the person Praying, be a Believer, but also that the Prayer made be a Prayer of Faith, or a believing Prayer : hence it is put in the present tense : [*Believing*] *And all things whatsoever ye shall ask in Prayer* [*believing*] not having believed, but believing, in the present tense : intimating to us, that a present exercise of Faith is required ; otherwise the Prayer may be an unbelieving, and so by consequence a fruitless Prayer, though the person be a believer ; for a Godly man may make a Carnal Prayer ;

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a believing man may make an unbelieving Prayer. As the good man *Joshua* seems to do, *Josh.* 7. 7, 8, 9. The truth is, we are said to have no more Faith than we act. And therefore Jesus Christ reproves his Disciples as faithless, when as 'tis clear, they wanted not the habit, but the exercise of Faith in that particular case of casting out the Dumb Spirit, *Mark.* 9. 19. Those Prayers therefore are faithless Prayers, in which there is not a present exercise of Faith, though the person or persons Praying, be in a state of Grace, and have the habit of Faith in their Hearts.

3. Question or Case of Conscience.

If the exercise and actuality of Faith be necessarily required in all things whatsoever we ask of God in the name of Christ then whether may such an exercise of Faith be accepted, as is accompanied with some doubting and wavering of the mind? or is such an exercise of Faith only current with God in Prayer, as is clear and steadfast, without the least doubt or wavering?

The reason of this scruple or question is, that saying of the holy man *James*, in his

his *Cha. 1. 6, 7.* But let him ask in Faith, nothing wavering; for he that wavereth is like a wave of the Sea driven with the wind, and tossed; for let not that man think, that he shall receive any thing of the Lord. Now if such an exercise of Faith, as is attended with some doubting, be not accepted of God, and the Prayers of such be altogether fruitless and unprofitable, as this Scripture seemeth to import, then is the hope, comfort and experience of the most of Gods Children thereby cut off and denied; And if otherwise, then how is this saying of *James* to be understood, and reconciled with other Scriptures?

Ans. There is a twofold doubting or wavering of the mind, spoken of in Scripture.

The one which doth always exclude and oppose Faith; so that where such doubting is, there is not the least acting or stirring of Faith in the Heart.

The other, which doth only argue weakness of Faith, and is consistent with the Exercise and actuality thereof at the same time in some degree.

1. Kind. The saying of the holy man *James* above-mentioned, is to be understood only of the former, viz. such doubt-

ing or wavering of the mind, as doth oppose Faith, and is exclusive to it; as is clear by the antithesis or opposition of Faith, and wavering, being set in the Text the one against the other; for saith *James*, *Let him ask in Faith*; And then he opposes thereunto this word [*wavering*] *nothing wavering*, *μὴ δὲ ὑποκινῶμεθα*, *i. e.* not disputing or cavilling; so that 'tis manifest the Apostle speaketh of such a doubting or wavering, as argues a nullity and privation of Faith, where there is no believing of the Promise and Word of God, but a disputing and cavilling against it, and an opposing of it. As in the case of that Lord, on whose hand the King leaned, when the Prophet by the Word of the Lord fore-told so great plenty to be on the morrow in the gate of *Samaria*; who disputing and reasoning against the Promise and Word of God, out of an unbelieving heart, answered the man of God: *Behold, if the Lord would make Windows in Heaven, might this thing be?* 2 King. 7. 1, 2. This was such a wavering as *James* speaks of which argued a nullity of Faith, and strength of unbelief in the Heart of that Noble man, who thus disputed and cavilled

villed against the Promise, giving no credit to the Word of the Lord, spoken by the Prophet, nor in the least acknowledging or relying upon the power of God, for the performance thereof: And therefore was made a Spectacle of Divine Vengeance, for his disobedience and unbelief, being trodden to death the next day in the Gate, which verified the Word spoken to him by the Prophet: *Thou shalt see it with thy Eyes, but shalt not eat thereof, v. 2.* compared with *v. 19, 20.*

And of such a doubting as this is that saying of the Apostle *Paul* to be understood, *Rom. 14. 23.* *And he that doubteth is damned, because he eateth not of Faith; for whatsoever is not of Faith is sin.* 'Tis evident in this place the Apostle speaketh of such a doubting, as argues a want of Faith, and right understanding of true Christian liberty, in that particular action of eating: In which he that eateth without Faith, is condemned in his own Conscience; though the thing itself be lawful, yet to him it is sinful and unlawful, for want of Faith in what he doth: Otherwise a man is not condemned in that action which

he doth with some doubting; where in there is also a real and true exercise of Faith, though in a weak and low degree. As *Simon* in letting down the Net at the command of Christ, *Luk. 5. 5.*

The second kind of doubting or wavering spoken of in Scripture, is such a doubting as is consistent with the present exercise of Faith, and argues only weakness of Faith, but not the want of it; which kind of doubting is found in the true Children of God, even in their best duties oft times; the consideration whereof, doth also much trouble and afflict them. *Gen. 18. 13. Mat. 8. 26. Mat. 14. 31.* Now this kind of doubting, though it is sinful, and to be reprov- ed, yet being a sin of infirmity, and weakness, not of wilful Rebellion, or Presumption, the Lord doth in mercy cover and pass it by in his people, and doth not therefore reject their persons, or any their sincere and faithful services, but doth graciously accept them in his Son Jesus Christ, notwithstanding such infirmities as by the following instances doth appear.

I Instance.

I. *Instance.* And thus *Sarah* was accepted of God in the exercise of her weak Faith, when the Lord made a promise of a Son to be given her in her old age, though therein she was not without some doubting, as appeareth by comparing *Gen. 18. 12, 13, 14.* with *Heb. 11. 11.* In the former, viz. *Gen. 18. 13.* She is reprov'd for her doubting: *Wherefore did Sarah laugh? Is any thing too hard for the Lord?* But in the latter, viz. *Heb. 11. 11.* She is commended and approved for her Faith at the same time, and in the same action; *Through Faith also Sarah her self received strength to conceive Seed, and was delivered of a Child when she was past age, because she judged him faithful, who had promised:* So that by comparing these two Scriptures, which relate to the same person and action, it is manifest, that *Sarah's* doubting through weakness of Faith, did not hinder her acceptance with God in that action, wherein there was the real exercise of her Faith, though weak and wavering: for saith the Text, *She judged him faithful who had promised,* therefore she did believe the promise.

mise, and relye upon the faithfulness of God for the performance thereof, notwithstanding the great doubting and stirring of unbelief in her Heart at the same time, which yet she resisted, and also at length did overcome. Whence these two things may truly be gathered.

1. That great doubting and wavering of the mind may consist with the real, though weak exercise of Faith in the same holy action.

2. That such holy actions are accepted of God in Christ, notwithstanding such doubtings.

2. *Instance.* The truth of this doth also appear in the case of him who brought his Child to Christ being possessed with a Dumb Spirit. And now finding his case to be exceeding difficult, in that he had already tryed the Disciples; and they could not cast out this Dumb Spirit out of his Son, *Mark. 9. 18.* he begins through unbelief to hæsitate and doubt concerning the power of Christ also, and puts an [if] upon the matter, *ver. 22.* But [if] thou ~~canst~~ do any thing, have compassion on us and

and help us: so that here was great doubting and stirring of unbelief, which Christ reproves, *ver. 23.* and replies to him; *If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth;* which reproof of Christ prevails so far upon him to the breaking of his Heart, and humbling of him for his unbelief, that he cries out with tears, from a sense of his sin, as well as of his Childs misery, *Lord, I believe, help mine unbelief.* Now here was some Faith mixed with great doubting and unbelief, yet being bewailed and confessed, the Prayer of this distressed and afflicted Father, on the behalf of his Child, is heard and answered; for the Dumb Spirit is cast out, and his Child healed, *ver. 25. 26, 27.*

Oh the infinite riches, and condescension of Free Grace! that ever such a Prayer as this should be heard and answered, that puts an [if] upon the power of Christ. [*If thou canst do any thing, have compassion on us.*] And yet there being found some Faith in this Prayer (though attended with so great doubting and acting of unbelief) it is accepted and owned by the Lord Jesus.

The answer and resolution therefore of the Question, is, That although it be the duty of the people of God, to press after such Faith in Prayer, as is without doubting and wavering of the mind, and all such doubting and wavering of the mind is in it self sinful and to be re-proved; and by no means to be cherished and allowed: Yet such doubting and wavering as doth arise only from weakness of Faith in the mind of a believer (where there is also a real exercise of Faith, though in the weakest and lowest degree) doth not, nor can at any time hinder the acceptance and efficacy of their Prayers with God; but their Persons and Prayers are acceptable to God, through Christ Jesus, with a *Notwithstanding* to all such infirmities. *Ephes. 1. 6. 1 Pet. 2. 5. James 5. 17, 18.*

4. Question or Case of Conscience.

If the exercise of Faith be necessarily required in all our prayers to God, then whether is it at all times, and in all cases required, that he who cometh to God in prayer, doth absolutely and determinately believe for the very thing that he Prayeth

eth for? or that he Prayeth with a submission to the will of God, either to have the thing that he Prayeth for; or that which the Lord may see to be better for him?

The occasion and ground of this Question, is, That some Christians being earnestly carried out in Prayer against some particular lust or corruption, as Pride, envy, inordinate love to the creature, or against the inward motions and lustings of any other sin, which they feel stirring in themselves, Praying that the same may be removed, and taken out of the way, or for any other Particular mercy which they have an earnest desire to obtain at the hands of God: Now because they find not an answer in the very thing asked, but the same lust or corruption remaineth still unsubdued, and the merc: so greatly desired, still denied, notwithstanding all their Prayers; The usually conclude, that they Prayed not in Faith, and that their prayers are not at all accepted or answered, because they have not the thing asked, referring their case to that of *James 4. 3. Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss.* And not only in this case
of

of inbred corruption, but also in many other cases, Christians are much put to it, to know when they ask in Faith, and when they ask amiss: Many concluding they ask not in Faith, because they have not the very thing asked.

Ans. The exercise of our Faith in Prayer, must be either absolute and determinate in the very thing asked, or conditional and latitudinary, referring to what may be most agreeable to the will of God, whether it be the very thing asked, or something else, according to the nature of the thing which we ask.

The Rule therefore which the Apostle proposeth to himself concerning Prayer, is diligently to be observed by every Christian, *1 Cor. 14. 15. I will pray with the Spirit; and I will pray with understanding also.* It therefore concerns every Christian to understand the nature of the thing, which he asks of God in Prayer, otherwise he may ask amiss.

The things which we ask of God in Prayer, may fall under a double distinction.

1. In respect of God.

2. In

2. In respect of our selves; which every Christian ought diligently to mark and consider, that so he may frame his Petitions, and exercise his Faith therein, according to the Rule of the Word; for Faith is guided by the Light of the Word, and cannot go against the Word, nor without the Word in any thing.

1. In respect of God.

The things which we come to ask of him in Prayer, are either clearly and absolutely revealed, promised, and foretold in his Word; or else secret, and not revealed, which he hath reserved in his own power.

2. In respect of our selves.

The things which we come to ask of God in Prayer, are either absolutely, and *per se* good and necessary for us; or they are good and necessary for us only upon such and such variable considerations, and suppositions, as we are very apt to mistake about.

Now to apply these general Rules to our case and question in hand.

1 *Rule.* In things which are clearly revealed, absolutely foretold and promised

mised in the Word of God, we ought to set our Faith absolutely and determinately for the very thing we pray for, and not to admit the least doubt or question, but to maintain an holy confidence, that such Prayers are always heard, though not presently answered; as I John 5. 14. 15. *And this is the confidence that we have in him, that if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us. And if we know that he heareth us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the Petitions that we desired of him.* There is no room for the least doubt or scruple in such things which we ask according to his will; but we are to Pray with full assurance of Faith and confidence in such cases, that the very thing we ask is granted. As for instance in some particulars.

I *Instance.* Suppose I pray for the downfall and utter ruine of *Babylon* (that *Mother of Harlots*;) I am to believe in Prayer absolutely and determinately (without if or And) that the very thing which I now ask, is granted in Heaven, and shall be performed in due time; because God hath clearly

ly revealed, and absolutely fore-told and promised the same in his Word, for the comfort of his Church and People, *Rev.* 18. 2.

2 *Instance.* If I ask of God in Prayer, the deliverance of his Church and People out of the hands of their wicked enemies, that do afflict them; I ought to pray in full assurance of Faith, and with sure confidence, that the very thing which I ask, is done in Heaven, and shall be certainly accomplished in Gods due time, because he hath clearly revealed, fore-told, and promised the same in his most holy Word; *Psalms* 37. 39, 40.

3 *Instance.* So likewise, when I ask of God in Prayer, the spiritual preservation and keeping of his Elect in a time of Tryal and Temptation, that not one of them may be seduced, nor the gates of Hell prevail against them, to the overthrow of their Faith. Herein I am positively to believe, that I have the very thing which I desire of God, because he hath clearly revealed, and absolutely promised the same in his Word,
Mat.

*Mat. 16. 18. Mat. 18. 14. Mat. 24. 24.
2 Tim. 2. 19.* And so in all other petitions for things of this nature.

The Second part of the Rule is that in things which are not clearly revealed, nor absolutely determined by the Word of God, but left dubious, obscure, and uncertain as to us, the mind of the Lord concerning the same not being declared; we are not in such cases to believe positively for the thing that we ask of God, but to refer our selves to his wisdom and choice therein, with submission to his holy will.

1 *Instance.* Thus the *Ninevites* in that solemn work of Fasting and Prayer, joined with Repentance, did not, nor could positively believe for the thing they asked of God, *viz.* the aversion of that national wrath which did hang over their head; but came to God in Prayer with a [may be of Faith] a [peradventure] a who can tell, if God will turn and repent, and turn away from his fierce anger, that we perish not, *Jonah 3. 9.* and yet were accepted of God therein, and had their Petitions granted;
v. 10.

2. *In-*

2 Instance. So Zeph. 2. 3. *The meek of the Earth* are there exhorted to seek the Lord, to seek meekness, to seek righteousness, with this motive: *It may be ye shall be his in the day of the Lords anger.* Where the Mind and Will of the Lord in the case is not clearly revealed and made known: There no more is required than a may be of Faith; for Faith cannot go before the Word of the Lord.

3 Instance. In this respect also the Apostle Peter saith to Simon Magus, Act. 8. 22. *Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God; if [perhaps] the thought of thine Heart may be forgiven thee.* His sin was great, his case very difficult and singular; the mind of the Lord not certainly known: Therefore the Apostle exhorts him to Repent, and to Pray; but it must be only with a may be, not a certainty of obtaining, with a perhaps: [*if perhaps thee thought of thine Heart may be forgiven thee.*]

2 Rule. In things which we ask of God in Prayer, which are absolutely and simply

simply good and necessary for us ; We are to believe and act our Faith positively upon the Promise and Word of God, for the very thing that we pray for, without any doubting or wavering in the case. As suppose I come to God in Prayer, to ask of him such a measure of grace and wisdom, as may inable and fit me to discharge my duty in my place and station, in such a manner as may be to his glory, and the good of his People: Here my duty is to act Faith upon his Word and Promise absolutely, for the thing I ask, without the least doubting or wavering; for so I am commanded, *James I. 5, 6. If any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God, &c. But let him ask in Faith, nothing wavering.* There is no room for doubting or wavering in such a case as this; in things of this nature.

It is not lawful to doubt or waver, though in some other cases it may be lawful, as hath been already shewed; which hint may give some further light to the right understanding of this Text of Scripture, which reacheth not unto all cases, but only unto cases of this or the like nature.

A pregnant Instance in this case, is
that

that of Solomon, 1 Kings 3. 5, 7, 8, 9. where Solomon, from a sense of God's great goodness in calling him to so great a place, and of his own great unworthiness, and inability to manage the same, to God's glory and his Peoples good. Omitting other things of more private concernment, he makes his request to God for Wisdom and Understanding, suitable to his place and station, v. 9. *Give therefore thy servant an understanding Heart, to judge thy people, that I may discern between good and bad; For who is able to judge this thy so great a people?* It being a thing absolutely good and necessary for him, in order to Gods glory, and his peoples good; he asks absolutely and determinately for this very thing, and no other, in exchange for it, and how acceptable and well pleasing, this request of Solomon was in the sight of the Lord. is sufficiently declared in the story, v. 10, 11, 12, 13.

The last part of the second Rule, is, that in things which are not absolutely and *per se* good and necessary for us, but may be good or bad for us upon such variable considerations, which are best known

known to God, and about which we are very apt to mistake: In all such cases we are not to believe for the very thing which we ask, but by Faith to relye upon, and refer our selves to the wisdom of God, for that which he seeth best for us.

Neither are we rashly to conclude, that we have asked amiss, and our Prayers are not heard, because we have not the very thing we desire; forasmuch as in all such cases there is an exercise of Faith, in submitting such desires of ours unto the will of God,

Either Expressed or Understood.

I. *Expressed*: As in that Petition of our Lord Jesus Christ, *Mat. 26. 39.* *O my Father, if it be possible let this Cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt;* which exercise of his Faith, in submitting to his Fathers will, is yet more vigorous, *v. 42.* and *Heb. 5. 7.* 'Tis said' *he was heard, in that he feared;* for, though he was not heard in the very thing asked, *viz.* that the Cup might pass from him; yet he was heard in that, wherein he

he submitted himself to his Fathers will.

2. *Implicite or understood*, as in that petition of *Paul*, when he Prayed against the thorn in the flesh that it might depart from him, 2 *Cor*, 12. 8. In which petition questionless he did exercise his Faith, and believed, though not positively, that he should have the very thing he asked; yet that he should have either that thing, *viz.* the taking away the thorn in his flesh, or else that which the Lord at that time should see to be better for him. *viz.* a sufficiency of grace to resist and withstand it. In which respect his petition was granted, *vers.* 9. And he said unto me, *My grace is sufficient for thee?* which was much better for him at that time, than that it should have departed from him; for he stood in great need of such an exercise at that time. And the thorn in his flesh, though it was sharp and grievous to him, was of special use and benefit to him, to keep him humble, and to prevent Spiritual Pride, and self exaltation after his abundance of Revelations, and high enjoyments, *vers.* 7. And lest I should

should be exalted above measure; through the abundance of Revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh; the Messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure.

Hence we may observe and learn, that the Lord knoweth how to make use of the Saints inbred corruptions, and Satans temptations, for their good and benefit: And therefore when we Pray against the motions and stirrings of inward corruption, and Satans temptations, that they may be taken from us; It ought to be with this *proviso* and condition expressed or implied, if the Lord seeth the same to be good for us, otherwise to have such a sufficiency of his Grace, as may enable us to resist and withstand them: for though the presence of such things be as a thorn in our flesh, *i. e.* very grievous and troublesome to us; yet thereby many times a greater evil is prevented, *viz.* spiritual pride, self-confidence, self-conceitedness, &c. And though such motions of inbred corruption and temptations of Satan are sinful: Yet where they are resisted and withstood by Faith, Prayer, Watchfulness, &c. they are not imputed;

imputed ; as the Apostle *Paul* teacheth ,
Rom. 7. 17. Now therefore it is no more
I that do it , but sin that dwelleth in me.
Yea such motions and stirrings of the
flesh , and buffetings of Satan , are oft-
times given to the Children of God in
great mercy to prevent a greater evil ,
as the Apostle saith, *v. 7. There was given*
me a Thorn in the Flesh.

So that in such cases Christians may
not conclude that their Prayers against
such motions and temptations , are not
heard , or that they have not Prayed in
Faith , because they are not presently re-
moved and taken away ; for there is
an exercise and work of Faith, in sub-
mitting such desires unto the Wisdom
and Will of God, and an answer is given
to such Prayers , though not in the very
thing desired, yet in that which the Lord
knoweth to be better for them ; as in
this case of *Paul* is most clear ; he Prays,
and he Prays earnestly , and importu-
nately , That the Thorn in his Flesh,
the Messenger of Satan, might depart
from him, *ver. 8. For this thing I besought*
the Lord thrice , that it might depart from
me. And he hath his Prayer answered
not in the thing desired , but in that
which

which was better for him at present,
v. 9. My Grace is sufficient for thee.
 The Thorn in his Flesh, the buffeting
 of Satan remaineth, notwithstanding
 all his Prayers against it: and yet his
 Prayer is heard and answered, in that
 he hath a sufficient measure of Grace and
 Strength from Christ to resist and with-
 stand it.

So likewise in that case of *Israel* in
 the wilderness, where being stung by
 the fiery flying Serpents, the sting where-
 of was deadly, and by which many died,
 they come to *Moses* with this request,
Numb. 27. 7. Pray unto the Lord, that
he take away the Serpents from us. And
Moses prayed for the people: And,
 though he was not heard in the very thing
 asked, *viz.* That the Serpents should be
 taken away; which questionless they
 thought to be best for them; yet was
 that Prayer answered in the lifting up
 of the Brazen Serpent; which upon
 other considerations the Lord saw to be
 better for them at that time. So *ver. 8.*
And the Lord said unto Moses, Make thee
a fiery Serpent, and set it upon a pole, and
it shall come to pass, that every one that is
bitten, when he looketh upon it shall live.
 Wherein

Wherein was exhibited a most lively Type of Christ, and of that healing virtue which the Children of God do receive from him by Faith, against the deadly sting of sin. The sting whereof would be deadly unto them, as well as unto others, were they not healed by looking unto Jesus Christ, who was lift up for that very end, *John* 3. 14, 15. And whereas many of the dear Children of God, when they feel this sting in their Consciences, do pray earnestly and importunately to have these Serpents of their own inbred corruptions, and Satans Temptations taken away, that they might never more be stung and hurt by them (who though they do well to express their zeal, hatred, and holy indignation against sin, which questionless is well pleasing in the sight of God) yet in Praying so positively and absolutely to have these removed, they do not pray with that understanding and knowledge they ought, neither do they therein pray according to the will of God, otherwise than by an implicate submission, which always ought to accompany
C such

such petitions: But have such Prayers answered in the remedy vouchsafed in Christ, which is best of all. *Rom. 8. 24, 25. 1 Joh. 2. 1, 2. 1 John 1. 9.*

Having as briefly as we well could, passed through these various and weighty questions, or cases of Conscience, about the Necessity of Faith in Prayer, for the satisfaction and comfort of Gods hidden ones, whose property it is not to take things of this nature upon trust, but conscientiously to enquire, till they be satisfactorily resolved from the Word of God, and have proved what his good and acceptable Will, and their duty is, in all things pertaining to his Worship and Service; and wherein so much of their Spiritual peace and comfort is bound up, we shall proceed to give the reasons, and then the application of the Point.

Reason 1. There is a necessity of Faith in Prayer, because we cannot otherwise pray to the Father in the Name of Christ; 'tis of absolute necessity that we pray in the Name of Christ, otherwise our Prayers

Prayers are neither acceptable to God, nor profitable to our selves, the acceptance and efficacy of the Saints Prayers with God, turn only upon this Hinge, and depend solely upon this *substratum*, that they are offered up in the Name, and by the hand of Christ: now if they fail in this, they lose all their work, which is but lost labour; *John* 14. 13, 14. *1 Pet.* 2. 5. *Rev.* 8. 3, 4. Prayers without Faith, are Prayers without Fruit, because they are without Christ: that which is Faithless, is Christless, and therefore must needs also be fruitless, for in him is all our fruit found, *Hos.* 14. 8. We cannot bear any fruit by any spiritual service or sacrifice we tender up unto God, but in and through his Son Jesus Christ. Now we cannot pray in the Name of Christ, if we do not Pray in Faith; it is Faith only that taketh hold of the Name and merits of Jesus Christ, and so brings our services unto God by him, *Ephes.* 3. 12. To pray in the Name of Christ, is to Pray in the Faith of his Name; we may Pray with the Name of Christ in our
C 2 mouths,

mouths, and yet not pray in his Name, unless we Pray with the Faith of Christ in our Hearts.

And observe it as a most certain and infallible Rule of interpretation, that where-ever we are in Scripture commanded to do, or promised to receive any thing in the Name of Christ; the meaning is, that we should do and receive the same by Faith in his Name, and not by the bare use of his Name, in our mouths; and to repose any confidence, or lay any stress upon the bare use of the Name of Christ in our mouths, any otherwise than we have, and exercise the Faith of his Name in our hearts, is to act more like unto Conjurers, than Christians; more like Sorcerers than Saints, *Act. 19. 13, 14, 15.* Then certain of the vagabond Jews, Exorcists, took upon them to call over them which had evil spirits, the Name of the Lord Jesus, saying, We adjure you by Jesus whom Paul preacheth. And there were seven Sons, of one Sceva a Jew, and chief of the Priests, which did so. And the evil spirit answered and said, Jesus I know, and

and Paul I know, but who are ye? And the man in whom the evil spirit was, leapt on them, and overcame them, &c. It seems by this Scripture, that 'tis a Piece of the Mystical Doctrin of Necromancy, and the Practice of forcerers, to trust much to the virtue and power of names; but this is no part of the Doctrine of Christianity, nor the practice of true Christians; they do not expect to prevail with God by the Name of Christ in their mouths, but by the Faith of Christ in their hearts; here the seven Sons of Sceva come with the Name of Christ in their mouths, thinking as many carnal Christians do, to do great matters by the power of that Name; but wanting the Faith of Christ in their hearts, they prevail nothing, but come off with shame and confusion of face, through their miserable and unexpected disappointment, and so will all those do that trust to their Carnal Forms, and Lyturgies, and as they suppose most Excellent, and Absolute forms of Prayers, which they conclude with the Name of Christ, which they often, and in vain do take into their
C 3 mouths,

mouths, whilst they have not the Faith of Christ in their hearts: To pray with the Name of Christ in the mouth, is fruitless and vain, where there is not the exercise of the Faith of Christ in the Heart; therefore the exercise of Faith in Prayer, is of absolute and indispensable necessity.

Reason 2. Because we cannot otherwise pray aright; 'tis the *light of Faith* only by which the children of God are guided and governed in all the Spiritual and Heavenly exercises of Religion; the things of the Spirit, the things of eternity are unseen things, things that are not seen by the eye of sense, and natural reason; and the light of Faith only, is that, by which these things are seen and made manifest, *Heb. 11. 1. Faith is the evidence of things not seen.* No inferiour light can be sufficient to guide in and about those things that are superiour to it; the light of sense being an inferiour light in man, which is common to him with the brute, is not able to guide him in and about the things of a man, which are proper and peculiar to him as a man: as to argue and discourse,

course, by fit *mediums* conducing to such an end; to meditate upon the works of Creation and Providence; to search out the natural Cause, and Reason of things, &c. To be guided in, and about such things he must have, and exercise the light of Reason which is a superiour light to that of Sense, and fitted and suited by the wisdom of his Creator, and planted in him for such an end.

So also the light of natural Reason, which is an inferiour light to that of Faith, cannot guide a man in those actions and things which are Spiritual, sublime, and above the reach of Nature, depending only upon Divine Revelation. A man by the light of Nature cannot understand nor discern the things of the Spirit, 1 Cor. 2. 14.

Now Prayer being a Work of the Spirit, and the things about which we converse with God in Prayer, being Spiritual and Heavenly things, depending upon Divine Revelation, upon the testimony of the Word and Spirit of God, we must of necessity have a superiour light to guide us in those things,

i. e. the light and evidence of Faith; which is a Heavenly gift, from the father of lights, to the Children of the Kingdom, by which only, they can converse with God, and offer up their Spiritual Sacrifices and Services to him in a right manner. And as it is impossible for a man to see, and hear, and smell, and feel, and taste, without sense, or to meditate, discourse, argue and understand the natural cause of things, without Reason; so it is impossible for a man to Pray, hear the Word, Receive the Seals of the Covenant, or perform any other Spiritual duty, in a right manner without Faith, *Heb. 11. 6.* He therefore that Prays without Faith, Prays amiss, and therefore receives not any fruit of his Prayers, *Jam. 4 3.*

Object. But may not a man that hath no true Faith, make such a Prayer, which for the matter of it is very good and holy, and ask such Petitions as are right and good, and which no man can find fault with?

Ans. We grant he may; but yet such an one doth ever ask amiss; for though he asketh right and good things in Prayer, yet the grounds upon which he asketh,

asketh, and his ends and aims, and the frame of his Heart in asking, are rotten and naught; and therefore he ever asketh amiss, *James 4. 3. Ye ask and have not, because ye ask amiss*; to spend it upon your lusts.

Reason and common light may direct a man to ask good and right things of God in Prayer; but these cannot help him to right grounds, to right ends and aims, and to a right frame of Heart in Prayer, only the light of Faith which is influenced by the Spirit and Word of God can do this, *Rom. 8. 26, 27. To Pray without the real exercise of true Faith, is to Pray in vain, because so to Pray, is to Pray amiss*; therefore the exercise of Faith in Prayer is of absolute necessity.

Reason 3. Because otherwise we cannot Pray with acceptation; and that is the duty of every Christian, and the excellency of true grace in every duty and holy action, to look unto God as its ultimate and highest end, to have its acceptation and approbation from him in all things, *2 Cor. 5. 9. Wherefore we labour, that whether present or absent, we may be accepted*

cepted of him. Now that is the glory of a duty, and that which Crowns it with life, sweetness, efficacy, blessing and honour, when it comes off with divine acceptance.

And therefore when God the Father would put the greatest honour upon his Son Jesus Christ, and Crown his work with the greatest glory, he doth it by witnessing his approbation and acceptance thereof from Heaven, *Mat. 3. 17.* And again, *Mat. 18. 5.* *This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased.* And where this is wanting, we may write upon our highest enjoyments and performances [*Ichabod*] *The glory is departed*; the like sweetness, glory and blessedness of a duty is lost, where this is wanting, *Gen. 4. 5.* *Mal. 1. 10.* Now therefore it mainly concerns us to look unto this in all our holy services and sacrifices, that they may come upon Gods Altar with acceptance; but this cannot be without Faith, we cannot pray with acceptance, if we do not pray in Faith, *Heb. 11. 6.* *But without Faith it is impossible to please him.* And again, *Whatsoever is not of Faith is sin.* So that faithless Prayers.

Prayers (like blind and lame sacrifices under the Law, *Mal.* 1. 8.) are both unacceptable and sinful; upon all which considerations it doth more than sufficiently appear, that there is a necessity of Faith in Prayer.

Use 1. The opening and discovery of this great Gospel truth, may be of use both to Sinners and Saints, to Believers and Unbelievers, to formal hypocrites, and to sincere Christians, whether weak or strong.

And first by way of Information; it may serve to inform us of three things very needful and profitable for all men to know.

1. How worthless, vile, and useless; yea how sinful and abominable the Prayers of all unbelievers, wicked persons, and formal hypocrites are.

If the efficacy, excellency and worth of Prayer dependeth upon, and is according to the exercise of Faith in it, and Faith be the Life, Glory, and Strength of Prayer, as hath been already shewed; then

then how fruitless, vile and worthless must the prayers of all Unbelievers, wicked persons, and formal hypocrites, in the World needs be ?

'Tis the manner of wicked persons, and formal hypocrites, whose Religion lies in a few external Services and Ceremonies, to glory much in their Book-prayers, their say-prayers, their form-prayers, which they cry up with as much superstitious, and blind zeal, as the *Athenians* did their Goddess *Diana*, the Image which fell down from *Jupiter*, *Act. 9. 35*. But if we consider the persons, who are the Admirers and Authors of such formal Services ; the visible Characters of unbelief, enmity against Christ, prophaneness, ungodliness, and hypocrisy, which are so legible in their hearts and lives, that he that runs may read them ; (*For out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaketh :*) We need no more to convince and assure us, that the best of such their services are but worthless, vain, and unprofitable things, which God takes no pleasure in, and which themselves can have no profit or fruit by. So *Mal. 1. 10*. Where the
Lord

Lord of Hosts speaking to a generation of corrupt and ungodly Priests and People, who by their unhallowed and un-sanctified courses, had polluted his Name, and corrupted his true Worship, as appeareth, ver. 6, 7, 8, 9. tells them plainly, ver. 10. *I have no pleasure in you, saith the Lord of Hosts, neither will I accept an offering at your hand.* And again, *Isa. 1. 13. Bring no more vain oblations; Incense is an abomination to me, the New-Moons, and Sabbaths, the calling of Assemblies I cannot away with; it is iniquity, even the solemn meeting. Your New Moons, and your appointed Feasts my Soul hateth, they are a trouble unto me, I am weary to bear them, and when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you: Yea when ye make many Prayers, I will not hear; Your hands are full of Blood.*

It is marvellous to consider the admirable wisdom of the Holy Spirit of God in the mouth of this holy Prophet, in cutting asunder the very sinews, and casting down the very Bulwarks, and strong Holds of the Hypocrites confidence, ripping open their hypocrisie and falshood to the quick, and casting most
contempt

contempt and holy disdain upon those things wherein they do most of all glory and boast themselves: Of those things wherein they deal most proudly, doth the Holy Spirit speak most contemptuously.

1. Their festivals, and self-sanctified holy days, in the observation whereof they place so much of their Religion, and do so confidently bless themselves, how doth the Lord contemn with utmost disdain? and cast out even with loathing and hatred? *v. 14. Your New Moons, and your appointed Feasts, my Soul hateth, they are a trouble unto me; I am weary to bear them.*

2. Their service, which answers to the Sacrifices of old; yea, their offerings and oblations which they bring and perform with so much carnal devotion, and contest for with so much blind zeal, how doth the Lord reject and protest against, as most hateful and displeasing to his holiness, and a burden too heavy for him to bear? *ver. 13. Bring no more vain oblations, Incense is an abomination unto me, the calling of Assemblies I cannot away with; It is iniquity, even the solemn meeting.*

Oh what shame and confusion will one day cover the faces of those wicked and ungodly hypocrites? who persecute, oppress, punish and condemn the generation of the righteous, because they cannot in conscience own or joyn with their Idolatrous Assemblies? which because of their number, they call solemn and publick, when as the Lord himself doth reject and disown them, and calls them iniquity and wickedness; not only wicked, and unjust, or ungodly, but wickedness, and iniquity, in the abstract; because it is iniquity under a pretence of Piety; Idolatry and false Worship under a pretence of worshipping God; spiritual wickedness is the greatest wickedness, because it hath in it the spirits of wickedness; *Simulata sanctitas* (saith Austin) *duplex iniquitas*; & *quia iniquitas*, & *quia simulatio*, i. e. feigned sanctity is double iniquity, both because iniquity and because feigned.

The Religion of Idolaters and false worshippers, is their worst Piece; their prophaneness, swearing, cursing drunkenness, excess of riot, chambering, wantonness,

wantonness, fornication, adultery, oppression, cruelty, with all other their fleshly wickedness, is bad enough; but their Religion, viz. Idolatry, Superstition, Will-worship, is worst of all, and therefore called emphatically, and by way of eminency (*ἀνεκδοκία*) i. e. *The unclean thing*, which the Saints of God are forbidden so much as to touch, as ever they expect and hope to be received and owned by God in that relation of Adoption: *Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, And touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you, and be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my Sons and my Daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.* Yea it is called, *the abominable thing which the Lord doth hate*, Jer 44. 4. *Oh do not this abominable thing that I hate*: Intimating that the holy God hath a special and peculiar hatred, abomination and detestation thereof above all other things.

3. Their formall prayers, which they make and say over with much ignorant devotion, with all their [significant] Ceremonies attending the same; their vestures and gestures, as bowing, cringing,

cringing, spreading forth hands, &c. which hypocrites do so much magnifie and applaud, in comparison whereof they do not only slight and dis-respect, but also most desperately, if not maliciously reproach and blaspheme even the blessed Spirit of Grace and Supplication; how doth the Lord reject and disown them? *vers. 15. And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you. Yea when ye make many prayers, I will not hear. Your hands are full of blood; ἔσθ' αἷμα ἐν ταῖς χερσίν* (as the voice from Heaven told the Gracian Tyrant) *i. e. The Sin within, will certainly frustrate and make void all the external services and devotions of such wicked hypocrites. In whom that Scripture is perfectly fulfilled, Prov. 28. 9. He that turneth away his ear from hearing the Law, even his prayer shall be abomination.*

Secondly, This may inform us of the excellency and preciousness of true Faith; The excellency and worth of things, is to be valued by their usefulness, and the more usefull and necessary a thing is, the more excellent and precious it is: Bread-corn, is a more excellent

excellent and precious thing than Tares, because more useful and necessary for the support of mans life. And wisdom is more excellent and precious than Rubies, because more useful for the management of human affairs. Grace is more excellent than Gifts and Parts, because more needfull and necessary in order to the souls eternal welfare. A man may be saved, be happy, and blessed for ever, without Gifts and Parts, but a man cannot be saved without Grace, *Joh 3. 3.* So Faith is a most excellent and precious thing, because so abundantly, so indispensibly, so universally useful and necessary for us, not only in this particular case of prayer, but also, in all other Spiritual sacrifices and services, which we offer up unto God through Christ.

In all which respects, that Scripture holds most true, *Heb. 6. 6.* *Without Faith it is impossible to please God.* We judge of the goodness and excellency of the Tree, by the goodness of the fruit, and of the Cause, by the Effects: So the excellency, and preciousness of Faith, is to be discerned by the excellent and
precious

precious fruits and effects thereof, in the hearts and lives of the precious Saints.

Oh! the great and glorious things which the Saints and Servants of God have been enabled and taught to do, by the strength and light of Faith, *Heb. II. 33. Who through Faith subdued Kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained Promises, stopped the mouths of Lions, quenched the violence of Fire, escaped the edge of the Sword, out of weakness was made Strong, waxed valiant in Fight, turned to flight the Armies of the Aliens; women received their dead raised to life again!* And as the Saints and Servants of God have been enabled to do: So also to suffer great things by faith, *ver. 35. And others were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better Resurrection. And others had tryal of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea moreover of bonds and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the Sword; they wandered about in Sheep-skins, and Goat-skins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented, &c.*

Oh the invaluable and incomparable worth and excellency of Faith! which bringeth

bringeth forth such precious fruits in the hearts and lives of poor, weak, and contemptible men and women ! who are subject to the same passions, encompassed with the same infirmities, liable to the same temptations common to mans nature, and yet have been enabled to do and suffer such things as are above, and against nature ; requiring a supernatural and divine ability, and all this by the light and strength of Faith ; As *ver. 39. All these obtained a good report through Faith. Optima sanè arbor, quæ tales habet fructus !* Most excellent, doubtless, is that Tree, which brings forth such fruits : *I will shew thee my Faith by my works*, saith the holy man, *James 2. 18.* Faith is a working Grace, and it worketh like its self. *Operari sequitur adesse* [*i. e.* the operation and working of things is according to the nature and being of them] is a true principle in nature, and 'tis as true also in Grace ; if therefore the works of Faith be so excellent and glorious, oh how excellent then is the nature, the life, and essence of this Faith ! It was the saying of a Heathen Philosopher, from the observation which he made of the excellent
and

and admirable works and fruits of moral virtue in the lives of some Heathens; that if the Face and Image of virtue could be represented to the bodily eye, the beauty and glory thereof would be so great, that it would even ravish the whole World; if the Heathens were so much taken with the Beauty of Morality, because of the excellent fruits and effects thereof in the lives of some Heathens Oh how much more should Christians be taken with the Beauty of Faith and Grace, because of the admirable and pretious fruits it hath brought forth in the lives of the Saints! with which the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament do so much abound.

Thirdly, This may inform us whence it is, and how it cometh to pass, that oft-times the Prayers even of Godly and Holy men, fall short of Heaven, and prove not successful for themselves or others, as both Scripture and experience doth testifie; even from hence it is, because they do not always Pray in Faith; a good man, a precious holy man, may have the
Grace

Grace of Faith in his Heart, and yet may want the exercise of it, in this or that particular Case, in this or that particular Ordinance or Duty.

Peter had the Grace of Faith in his heart, but wanted the active power and exercise thereof in that particular case of confessing and owning Jesus Christ before men, when he was in the High Priests Hall, *Mat.* 26. 70, 72, 74. *Moses* and *Aaron* had the grace of Faith, but wanted the energy and exercise thereof at the water of *Meribah*, in that particular case of bringing forth water out of the Rock, onely by speaking to it. And their want of Faith did appear, in that they smote the Rock twice, when they should have but spoke unto it, *Numb.* 20. 11, 12. v. compared with *vers.* 8. The Disciples had the grace of Faith in their hearts, and the gift of the Faith of the miracles, but yet wanted the exercise thereof in that particular case of the child possessed with a dumb Spirit, *Mark* 9. 17, 18, 19. The two Disciples going to *Emmaus*, had the grace of Faith in their hearts, but wanted the activity and comfort thereof in reference to the

the death, sufferings, and resurrection of Christ from the dead, *Luke 24. 25, 26, 27.*

In all which actions those holy men of God miscarried, and missed of their wonted and usual success, because they did not believe, *i. e.* they did not exercise Faith in those particular cases wherein the Lord did leave them to themselves, to try and prove them, that they might more sensibly and experimentally know their own weakness, and so keep a more constant dependance upon Divine assistance.

Now as the precious and holy Servants of God (who have nature as well as grace, flesh as well spirit) may miscarry in other holy actions and duties; so also in this duty of prayer, so far as to miss of that blessed fruit and success therein, which at other times they find; and hence it is because they do not always Pray in Faith *James 1. 5, 6, 7.* *If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask it of God, that giveth to all men Liberally, and upbraideth not, and it shall be given him: But let him ask in Faith, nothing*

nothing wavering; for he that wavereth is like a wave of the Sea, driven with the wind, and tossed; For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord. The holy man James is now speaking unto Saints, unto such as he supposed to have the grace of Faith, and yet putting them upon this great duty and work of Prayer, and that in a particular case for wisdom to manage their profession as they ought to do, under those tryals and temptations which were upon them, which being a thing absolutely necessary for them, and according to the revealed will of God, he gives them assurance to prevail in the very thing asked, vers. 5. Let him ask of God, &c. And it shall be given him; but still with this proviso, and upon this condition, that he ask in Faith, vers. 6. But let him ask in Faith, &c.

Whence 'tis clear, and the Apostle takes it for granted, that such an one as hath true Faith, may yet fail in the exercise thereof, in this Ordinance and Duty of Prayer; therefore he saith, *But let him*

him ask in Faith; intimating that a godly man, a holy man may ask of God in prayer, and yet may not ask in Faith, and thereby miscarry and lose all the comfort and fruit of his asking, *vers. 7. Let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord.*

2. Use This may be for caution and warning to all the people of God; whether they be strong in Faith, or weak in Faith; whether their Grace be little or much, to beware and take heed that they neglect not to stir up, and put in exercise, that Grace which they have, as in all other holy duties, so especially in this great Duty and Work of Prayer.

The Exhortation of Paul to Timothy in reference to his Ministerial gift, may be applied to every Christian in reference to his Grace, 2 Tim. I. 6. *Wherefore I put thee in remembrance, that thou stir up the gift that is in thee, by putting on of my hands.* A man may have excellent
D gifts

gifts and parts, and yet the Church of God be never the better for them, unless those gifts be stirred up, and kept in exercise: Yea a man may in time lose his gifts by neglecting the exercise and improvement of them, as *Mat. 25. 29. But unto him that hath not, (i. e. exerciseth and improveth not, as is clear by the scope of the Parable) shall be taken away even that which he hath.* So a man may have true Grace, and a very great measure of it, and yet may in some particular cases, and under the enjoyment of most precious Ordinances, and in the performance of most Holy duties, be altogether fruitless and unprofitable, both to himself and others, through not exercising and stirring up the Grace which he hath: Yea he may (though not utterly lose) yet greatly weaken and impoverish his Grace, *Revel. 3. 2. John 11. 26. I John 3. 9. and 5. 18.*

O Christian, know, that the Life and comfort of thy Soul under the most precious Ordinances, and in the performance of holy duties, whether
with

with thy self, or with others, lieth not so much in thy having of true Grace, in thy having of Faith, but in the activity of Grace, and in the exercise of that Faith which thou hast. Oh therefore beware and take heed that thou neglectest not to stir up, to keep in exercise thy Grace, as ever thou desirest that thy Soul should thrive and prosper under the Holy Ordinances of Jesus Christ, and be filled with joy and peace in believing.

The life of Ordinances, the sweetness of the Word and Promises, the comfort and fruit of holy duties is lost, when once the exercise of Faith is lost! take away the exercise of Faith out of the heart of a Christian, and what are the most pure and powerful Ordinances, the most sweet and Precious Promises, the most holy and heavenly duties, when Performed with the greatest external excellency, but as so many empty Pipes, as so many broken Cisterns, which can hold no water?

And therefore it is that the Devil doth so industriously tempt the Saints of God to Spiritual Slumber and Security, that so hindering the exercise of their Grace, he may deprive them of the Spiritual Fruit and Comfort of all Gods Ordinances; and thereupon tempt them to doubt and question whether they be his ordinances or no: and at length (if they be not sincere) prevaleth with them to cast off ordinances, as fruitless and unprofitable, and to cast reproach and dirt upon them, whereas indeed the fault is in their own hearts, *Mal. 3. 14. Micah 2. 7.* And hereupon hath the Devil taken advantage to sow those cursed tares, and corrupt opinions of Non-Ordinances, Ranters, Quakers, &c. all which though they Differ among themselves, yet do agree in this, to cast all the dirt and reproach they can upon the precious and heavenly ordinances of Jesus Christ: And this hath the Devil done whilst Professors were fallen asleep, and had lost the life, exercise, and activity of their Grace, as it is written, *Mat. 13. 25. But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the Wheat.* The

The Preaching of the Gospel, it is most precious and powerful Ordinance of Jesus Christ, for the Conversion, Edification and Salvation of the souls of men. *Act. 26. 18. Eph. 4. 12. Rom. 1. 16.* But this Gospel may be preached clearly, powerfully, and faithfully preached, and yet those unto whom it is preached, have no fruit nor profit by it, for want of Faith, *Heb. 4. 2.* But the Word preached, did not profit them, not being mixed with Faith in them that heard it. Oh therefore, when thou goest to hear the Word preached, Christian, beware that thou stirrest up the grace that is in thee, and in particular, this grace of Faith, without which the Word preached will not, cannot profit thy soul, though the Apostles themselves themselves, yea though an Angel from Heaven should be the Preacher! The fruit and benefit of the Word Preached, doth not depend so much upon the Grace and Gifts of the Minister, as upon the Faith of the hearer!

So likewise Prayer, it is a most pre-
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cious

cious and powerful Ordinance of Jesus Christ, for the obtaining of all things that we stand in need of at the hands of God. The text it self speaks sufficiently unto this point, *Mat. 21. 22. And all things whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive.* And upon this very consideration some have called Prayer the Key of Heaven; but Faith is the hand which turns this Key. Look therefore as the Key without the hand to turn it is useless; so Prayer without Faith is fruitless; thou mayest therefore, Christian, Pray, and be much in Prayer, and yet lose all thy labour, unless thou attest thy Faith in Prayer; thou mayest bring thy Key of Prayer to the Gate of Heaven, and yet find it fast lockt against thee, unless thou hast a hand of Faith to turn this Key. Oh therefore beware and take heed that thou neglectest not to stir up, and exercise thy Faith in Prayer. Oh how many Praying-days, and Fasting-days, have been lost to the people of God, for want of Faith? which only guides us aright in Prayer, gives us a right frame of Heart,

Heart, and right ends and aims in Prayer, as hath been already shewed? 'Tis a great Scripture which we have in *Zechariah*, to this purpose, *Zech. 7. 5. When ye fasted and mourned in the fifth and seventh Month, even those seventy years, did ye at all fast unto me, even unto me?* Here we have a Praying People, who were abundant and constant in this duty for seventy years together, and that in the most solemn and strict manner, joyning Fasting with their Praying, and yet not accepted of God therein, nor at all profited thereby; and the reason is hinted; they did not Pray with a right frame of Heart; they had not right ends and aims in their Prayers; *Did ye fast at all unto me, even unto me?* and whence was it that they thus miscarried in Prayer, and had not true, spiritual, holy, and right ends and aims in Prayer, but from hence, that they Prayed not in Faith; they wanted the Light and Life of Faith, and were not guided by the Word in their fasting and praying, and so praying amiss, lost all their labour, *Jam. 4. 3.*

Quest.

Quest. But how doth it appear that they Prayed not in Faith?

Ans. They looked not unto the word spoken by the former Prophets, *verse 7.* therefore they Prayed not in Faith; 'tis by Faith that we look unto the Word of God, so as to make it our rule; now they obeyed not the Word, and therefore Prayed not in Faith.

Oh therefore Christian, beware thou failest not in this, in the exercise and activity of thy Faith in Prayer; thou hadst better fail in any thing than in this; thou hadst better fail in the gift of Prayer; thou hadst better fail of words in Prayer; thou hadst better fail of the wisdom and excellency of Speech in Prayer; thou hadst better fail of affection in Prayer, than to fail of Faith in Prayer; other defects and infirmities will be passed by and covered, where Faith is active: *James 5. 17. Hebrews II. 6.* but all other accomplishments and seeming excellencies, will be despised where

where Faith is wanting; 'tis better for a man to want clothes, and all outward ornaments of the body, than to want life; life is the glory and excellency of the creature; the poorest and most contemptible creature which hath life, is more excellent than the most glorious creature that wants it; hence saith Solomon, *A living Dog is better than a dead Lion.* Faith is the life of prayer, the glory, the excellency, the strength of prayer; Other things are but the Ornaments of Prayer: Oh Christian! look not so much to the Ornaments, as to the Life of thy holy duties, lest God reject them as a dead carcass.

Use 3. Thirdly, This may be profitable for Exhortation,

1. Unto Sinners.

If there be such a necessity of Faith in Prayer, that without it we cannot Pray, either acceptably to God, or profitably to our selves or others, as hath been at large declared and proved; then doth it nearly concern

every Soul yet in the state of Nature, and shut up, or concluded under unbelief (as all unregenerate persons are, whether they be Jews or Gentiles, Christians or Heathens, Prophane persons or Professors, *Rom. 11. 32. chap. 3. 9.*) to get out of that condition, and to labour for true saving Faith in Christ.

'Tis true, Faith is a Heaven-born Grace, which grows not in Natures Garden, *John 5. 40 Ephes. 2. 8.* 'tis neither in the freedom of mans will to desire, nor in the ability of his power, to work Grace, to produce and bring forth a work of true Saving Faith in himself: but as the Apostle teacheth, *Phil. 2. 13. It is God which worketh in you, both to will and to do, of his good pleasure.* Nevertheless, Sinner, it is thy duty to strive in the use of all holy means, and to look up unto God, through Christ, both to incline thy will, and to give thee power from Heaven, to do his will, *Mat. 7. 7. John 6. 27. Phil. 1. 12.* The Miller cannot command a wind, but he can spread the Sails, and wait upon

upon the Providence of God for a Gale; *The wind bloweth where it listeth, so is every one that is born of the Spirit, Joh. 3. 8.* And if thou desirest to be born again, thou must wait for those gales, and thou must wait in the use of means: And there is a blessing promised to them that do so, *Prov. 8. 34, 35.* The Husband-man cannot command the Clouds, but he may observe the season, prepare the Earth, and sow the precious seed, and then patiently wait for the early and the latter Rain, and he finds at Harvest, his labour is not in vain. *Jam. 5. 7.*

There is a connexion, though not of Causality, yet of Instrumentality, of the end to the means, of mercy to duty, of privilege to practice, of the Harvest to the Seed-time, of Glory to Grace, of Grace to the means of Grace; As ever therefore thou wouldest attain the end, which is Salvation, thou must use the means: He that will ascend to the last, or highest staff of the Ladder, must begin at the first.

O therefore, gratifie not the Devil and thy own unregenerate will, with such cavilling, and shifting, but set upon the work in good earnest; up and be doing, and the Lord shall be with thee. And assure thy self, though it may prove difficult and hard labour, yet it will not prove lost labour, *John 6. 27. Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life.*

Object. But perhaps the Sinner will say, *How shall I come by it? How shall I obtain it? What assurance have I, that if I labour for this meat, I shall have any fruit of my labour?*

Answer. O yes, there is a blessed promise joyned to this command, he that bids thee labour, doth promise thee thy labour shall not be in vain; and therefore it is added; *Which the Son of man shall give unto you, for him hath God the Father sealed.* Oh sinner know, that God the Father hath sealed, i. e. ordained and anointed Jesus Christ, and constituted him under the broad Seat of Heaven, to be

be the Mediator of the everlasting Covenant, and to dispense and give out all the spiritual and heavenly gifts and blessings thereof, unto all such as the Father hath given to him, and by vertue of that donation shall come to him, *Joh. 17. 2. As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him.*

Object. But thou wilt say, how shall I know whether I be one of those whom the Father hath given to Jesus Christ? And that if I do come unto him, I shall be received? Oh I am afraid that Jesus Christ will not receive such a sinner as I am, such a wretch as I am; I am so vile and wretched, that I fear he will rather reject and cast me out as a Reprobate, as a vessel of wrath, than receive me unto grace and favour.

Ans. Thou shalt know that thou art one of those, whom the Father hath given to Christ, by thy coming to him, and closing with him in the Word of the Gospel; for none but such can possibly come to him, so

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as to receive life from him, *Joh. 6. 44.* thou canst not know before-hand that thou art given by the Father to Jesus Christ, but thou must first come unto Christ, and then thou mayest know that the Father hath given thee to him, and if thou comest unto Jesus Christ, he hath assured thee in his Word, that he will not reject thee, he will not cast thee out, how vile or wretched soever thou beest, *Joh. 6. 37.* *All that the Father giveth me shall come to me, and him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out.* Oh it is a blessed word; [*In no wise, cast out*] what-ever thy cause or condition be, though never so desperate in thy own eye, yet if thou comest unto him, he will in no wise cast thee out,

And thou hast the blessed presidents and experiences of many great sinners, who upon repentance and coming unto Jesus Christ by Faith, have obtained mercy, and are now glorified Saints in Heaven; witness *Mannasseh*, who used witchcrafts and enchantments, who shed much innocent blood,
and

and filled *Jerusalem* with Blood, and made a whole Nation to sin, and yet when in his affliction he humbled himself greatly, and sought unto the Lord, he obtained Mercy; and he that had been before a wicked Necromancer, a Sorcerer, a Murderer, an abominable Idolater, hath now obtained Mercy, becomes a New Creature; old things are passed away with him, and all things are become new, *2 Chron. 33. 1, --- 20.* *Mary Magdalen* was a very great sinner, out of whom Christ had cast seven Devils, and yet she obtained Mercy, and when she came unto Jesus Christ, he did not cast her out, *Mark 16. 9.* *Luke 8. 2.* So likewise *Paul* was a great sinner before Conversion, a Persecutor, a Blasphemer, and Injuricus, and yet he obtained mercy, *1 Tim. 1. 13.*

And wherefore did the Lord single out these great and chief sinners, and make them objects of his saving grace and favour? but that in them he might exhibit a pattern of his glorious grace, for the encouragment of other great sinners (not to continue in sin, with
a pre-

a presumption of finding mercy at the last) but to repent, and turn, and come in to his Son Jesus Christ, that they may be saved; So *1 Tim. i. 16.* *Howbeit (saith Paul.) for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all long suffering for a pattern to them, which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting. —*

And this know, poor sinner, that *Jesus Christ* came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance; Oh therefore be not discouraged, because thou art a sinner, but hearken to the call of Christ, in the voice of the Gospel, and know, that thou art called this day by this word of Exhortation, to labour for Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, that so thou mayest be in a capacity of performing this holy duty of Prayer, and other holy duties, so as to please God in the doing of them, which without Faith thou canst not do. *Heb. 11. 6.*

Obj. But what shall I do in the meantime? shall I neglect Prayer, because I cannot

cannot in my natural and unbelieving estate please God in what I do?

Answ. No, oh no, thou art commanded to Pray, to call upon the Name of the Lord; Prayer is a natural duty, written upon every mans Conscience; the obligation whereof cannot be dispensed with, by any power, or under any pretence whatsoever; thou must not therefore cast off Prayer, that so thou mayest continue in thy sin and unbelief; but thou must cast off thy sin and believe in Jesus Christ, that so thou mayest continue in Prayer, which if thou neglectest, thou art guilty of a three-fold Robbery.

1. Thou Robbest God of his glory.

2. Thy own Soul, Body and Family of the Mercy.

3. Thy Neighbour of the Charity of thy Prayers.

Simon Magus was in the gall of bitterness,

terness, and yet *Peter* bids him Pray, *Act. 22. 23*: But withal he bids him repent also: *Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray to God.* Therefore a wicked man, a man in the gall of bitterness must Pray. But withall he must Repent of his wickedness, and believe, that through Christ Jesus, remission and forgiveness of his sin, may be obtained; and upon this ground of Repentance and Faith in Christ, the Apostle bids him to Pray: *If peradventure, or perhaps the thought of thine Heart may be forgiven thee.*

Secondly, Unto Saints.

Oh ye precious Saints of God, who have this precious Faith, this precious seed of God bestowed upon you in Jesus Christ, to whom it is given to believe in the name of Jesus; unto you doth this word of exhortation speak, as unto Sons and Daughters. Oh be not faithless, but believing, exert, and put forth this Heaven-born Principle and seed of Faith into exercise; let it not lye by you

you as a dead drug, when there is such quick Trading at the Throne of Grace. Great Merchants will empty their Ware houses, and bring forth their richest commodity when they have a quick Trade, when the wants and necessities of their own or other Countries, do give them advantage to put off with greater profit; they will use the utmost diligence and industry, and will lay out themselves to the utmost; they will venture all their stock, engage all their credit, improve all their interest in such a season; Shall men be so wise for Earth, and shall not the Children of the Kingdom be as wise for Heaven?

O ye Saints of God, ye are the Heavenly Merchants, who only have this Trade in your Hands; ye have interest in the Heavenly Country, and ye have a Factor there, who is both able and faithful, who will not fail to put off your Prayers with the best advantage, and procure you returns in the richest and best things of the Country, which shall best answer your interest and profit here on Earth.
And

And now ye have a most precious season.

1. The wants and necessities of three great Nations (whereof your selves are a part, and in the peace whereof your peace is bound up) do call aloud for the help of your Prayers, being under as great symptoms and tokens of divine pleasure, and under as black a Cloud of Stormy wrath, as any Nation we read of in all the Word of God; search the Scriptures, and take a catalogue of all the characters and marks expressed there of a generation marked out for vengeance; and try if they be not all found upon this generation, this one excepted; That the Lord of Hosts hath reserved unto himself a remnant. And can you see all this and be silent? have ye not so much charity, so much bowels of compassion for your native Country, your children and posterity, as *Abraham* had for *Sodom*? as *Lot* for *Zoar*? *Gen. 18. 22.*

2. The desolations of Mount *Zion*, the captivity of Gods Ark, the afflictions.

afflictions and troubles that are accomplished in your dear brethren, who are like sheep appointed for the slaughter, do call aloud for your most fervent prayers, and strong cries, to be sent up to Heaven incessantly, and that you give the Lord no rest till he doth arise, and have mercy upon *Zion*, and turn the captivity of his People as streams in the South: Can ye be at ease in *Zion*, and not regard the afflictions of *Joseph*? Can ye behold *Zion* in travel, yea crying out, and in pangs, to be delivered, and not lend a helping hand?

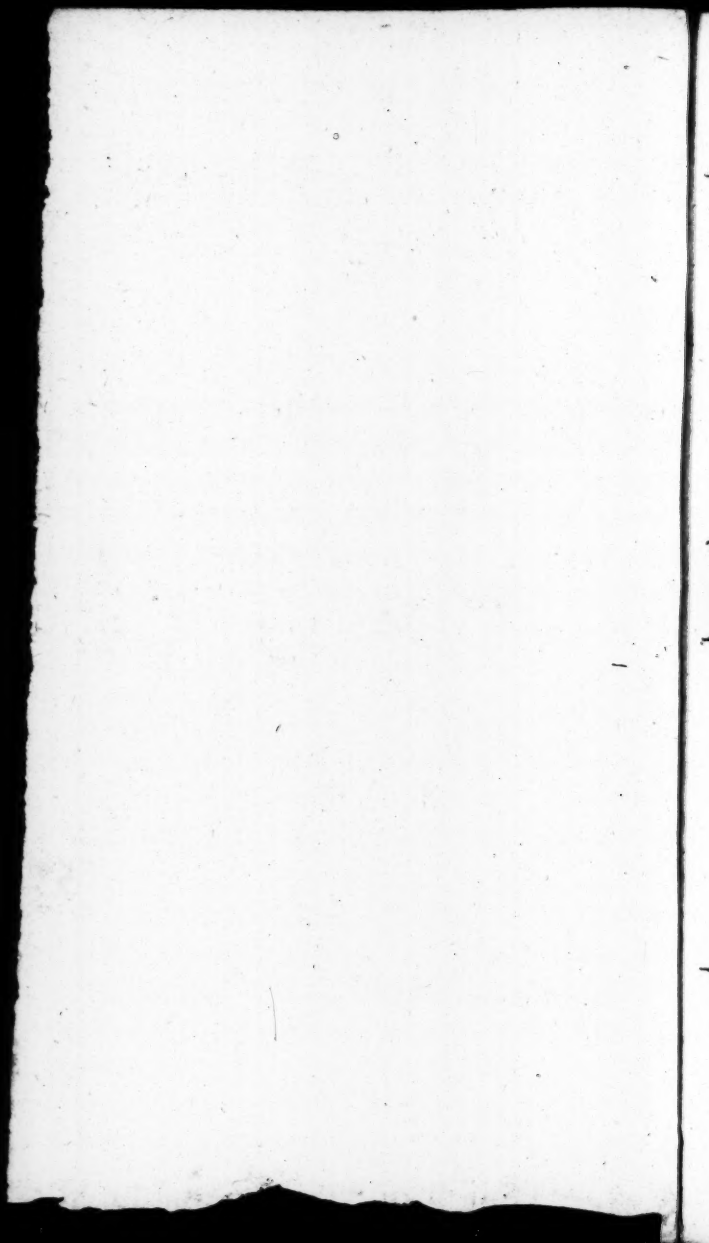
3. The ruinous case and condition of thousands of precious souls, who are like to perish for want of provision, to starve for want of the bread of life; who wander from mountain to hill to seek the Word of the Lord, and cannot find it; who cry out for bread, and behold stones are given them instead of bread, who ask for flesh, but are fed with Scorpions; who seek water, but find none, and their tongue faileth for thirst; do also in their deep misery and distress cry out

out and call aloud to you; Oh pray the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth labourers, and drive out loiterers; that he would raise up unto us a soul searching and soul saving Ministry, and take away from us the heavy scourge and plague of a soul-murdering, blind and superstitious Clergy; for where the blind lead the blind both must fall into the ditch.

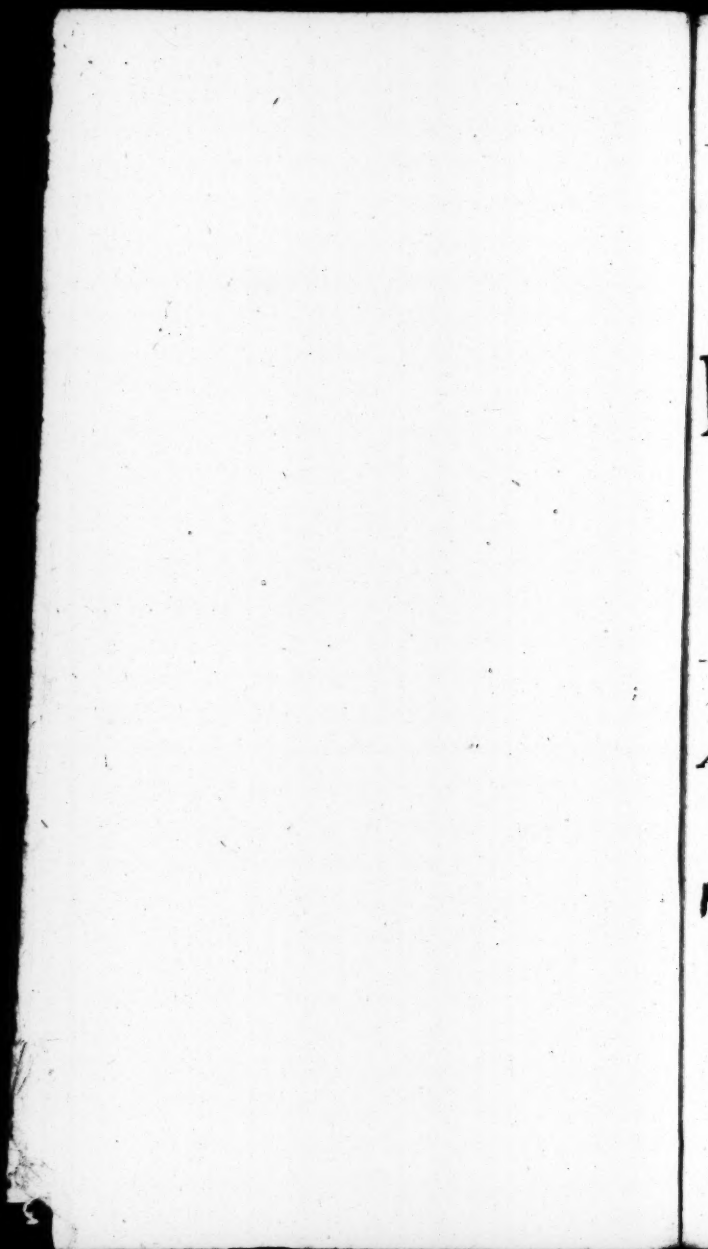
Oh ye Saints of God, who only know the worth of Souls, who only can be truly sensible of spiritual evils, and know both the worth and want of a true Gospel-Ministry; can ye be silent and see such Merchandize made of the Souls of Men, by the greedy Merchants of *Babylon*? Never was there a time, from the foundation of the World, in which the Saints had more advantage of doing great and eminent service by Prayer for the poor Nations of the Earth, and for their dear brethren in sufferings, and for the Souls of men! yea and for the whole Creation, than at this day! In which the Nations of the Earth are so greatly distressed, the
minds

minds of men perplexed, and their Hearts even failing them for fear, and for looking after the things that are coming to pass on the Earth; yea the whole Creation groaneth and travel-
leth in pain, desiring to be delivered from the bondage of corruption, into the glorious liberty of the Sons of God. In which Zions consolation, and Babylons confusion greatly hatteneth: the time of Babels Tyranny, and the Saints Captivity, is so near fulfilled, and the times of refreshing a coming from the presence of the Lord, and the time of the restitution of all things: Oh ye Saints of God know that this is a precious season; let but your Prayers meet together in the Angels hands, who stands before the Altar to offer them up with his own Incense, and then great and marvellous things will be done in the Earth, *Revelation 8. 3, 4, 5.*

T H E



THE
EFFICACY
OF
FAITH
IN
PRAYER.



The Efficacy
OF
F A I T H
IN
P R A Y E R.

Matthew 21. 22.

*And all things whatsoever ye shall ask
in Prayer, believing, ye shall re-
ceive.*

THE next thing observable in
the Text, and proposed to
be handled in this Treatise,
is

The Efficacy of Faith in Prayer.

E 2

Faith

Faith is a plenipotentary grace, it hath a kind of omnipotency in it, it cometh with a full commission from Heaven, to the poor Disciples of Christ on earth, by which they may do and obtain great things with God; yea all things whatsoever they shall ask in prayer, they shall obtain by Faith. The great God of Heaven will not, cannot deny any thing to his poor servants here on earth, which they ask in Faith. He is faithful who hath promised, and cannot deny himself; the word is gone out of his mouth in righteousness, and he will not repent, he will not call it in again. *And all things whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive.*

Oh here is a large commission indeed! *All things! and all things whatsoever.* Here are no limits, no bounds set to faith in prayer! Faith may ask what it will, and have what it asks at the hand of God! Faith can but ask and have! Faith doth but speak the word on Earth, and it is done in Heaven! the truth is, Faith is a modest grace, a prudent, wise and sober grace, that looketh at the will of God as her Rule,

Rule, and the glory of God as her ultimate end and aim in all things, and therefore will not, cannot desire or ask any thing contrary to Gods most holy will. or cross to, and inconsistent with his glory; and therefore Faith hath the Key of Heaven committed to her, and may go to the heap of mercy, and take even what she will, *Mat. 15. 28.* *O Woman great is thy Faith, be it unto thee even as thou wilt.*

The Efficacy of Faith in Prayer, and the mighty prevailing Power it hath with God, is sufficiently made manifest.

1. In the truth of Gods most holy Word and Promises.

2. In the Saints most precious and constant Experiences.

1. The truth of Gods most holy Word and Promises, do abundantly attest and bear witness to the mighty efficacy of Faith in Prayer; great things are promised, yea all things are Promised to the prayers of Faith. So in the Text: *And all things whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive.*

This is the Word of Christ, this is a gracious Promise of Jesus Christ to his disciples here on earth, and he will be as good as his word, he is the faithful witness, and the truth itself, and therefore he cannot lye; he can as well cease to be God, as cease to be true and faithful in his Word and promises, 2 Cor. 1. 20. *For all the Promises of God in him are Yea, and in him Amen, [i. e. truth and assurance, or most sure and stedfast] unto the Glory of God by us; So that God stands upon the truth of his Word and Promises, as a great part of his glory, and he will have the glory of his truth, whatever comes of it, he will appear to be true in his Word and Promises yea in all his Promises to a jot and tittle, there shall not the least jot or tittle thereof fail, till all be fulfilled, Mat. 5. 18. For verily I say unto you, till Heaven and Earth pass, one jot, or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the Law, till all be fulfilled: As if the Lord had said, ye are apt to set light by my Word, to question and doubt of the*

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truth and certainty thereof; but I assure you, I stand so much upon my Word to have it fulfilled and made good to the utmost, that if Heaven and Earth lay in one scale, and the least iota or tittle of my Word in the other, I would rather suffer Heaven and Earth (*i. e.* the whole Creation) to perish and come to nothing, than that the least iota or tittle of my Word should fail, till all be fulfilled so wonderfully doth the God of Truth stand upon his Glory in this respect; therefore all the Promises of God in him (*i. e.* in Christ) are yea, and in him amen, because this is for the glory of God, to be as good as his word, and not to falsifie but to fulfill all his Promises.

Now many exceeding great and precious Promises hath God made in Christ unto his people, Praying in Faith, or exercising Faith in Prayer. We shall instance in one or two, in lieu of all the rest; which being added to this of the Text, may be sufficient to give a full testimony to the truth in hand; that so in the

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mouth

mouth of two or three witnesses, this word may be established.

The first that we shall instance in, is, that great Charter of heaven, or promise made to the poor afflicted, tempted, and despised Saints, and Churches of Christ here on earth, *Mat. 18. 19. Again, I say unto you, that if two of you shall agree on earth, as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in Heaven.*

The number of true Disciples is in many places very small, it may be two of a Family, and one of a Tribe; and the true Churches of Christ, are for the most part but small, and few in number: especially compared with the false Church and Churches of Antichrist, the Whore that sitteth upon many Waters, *Rev. 17. 15.* But O ye Saints and Churches of Jesus Christ, let not the paucity, and smallness of your number discourage you: though the malice and rage of the ungodly, may like the great water-floods, keep good Neighbors one from

from another, so that ye cannot assemble and meet together in that solemn and publick manner as ye could desire; yet be not discouraged, do not think the Efficacy and strength of Prayer is thereby so diminished, or weakened, that ye cannot prevail in Heaven: *You may be present in Spirit, when absent in body, Col. 2. 5.* Your Prayers may meet in Heaven when your persons cannot meet upon Earth. *You may be cast into Prisons, and Dungeons, Revel. 8. 3.* You may be scattered, and wander in the desert places, in the dens and caves of the earth, but here is your comfort, Heaven is still open.

And let me tell you from this Scripture; ye may do and obtain great things in Heaven (*If two of you shall agree on earth, as touching any thing you shall ask: it shall be done for you in Heaven.*) If two of you shall agree; 'tis not meant in a way of worldly policy and carnal contrivance, but in a way of Spiritual Harmony and consent of Soul, arising from the unity of Faith, and the anointing of the Spirit, teach-

ing and guiding you in prayer, to ask those things that are according to the will of God, *Rom. 8. 26. 27.* Let the thing be what it will, ask it in the Heaven above, or in the earth beneath; let it be never so hard and difficult, and in the eye of sense and reason even impossible, yet it shall certainly be done for you, and granted in Heaven. Oh what a blessed charter! what a glorious liberty is this, granted to the children of God, that by Faith in prayer here on earth, they may have any thing, even what they will done for them in Heaven!

And this is the priviledge of all those little ones, that believe in Christ, *Mat. 18. 10. and 14. compared with vers. 19, 20.* This is not the priviledge of old Fathers, and strong men only, but even of babes in Christ, such as are little ones, little in the worlds account, and it may be little in the eye of other Saints, but least of all in their own eye; yet these little ones that believe in Christ, how contemptible, little and low soever they be on Earth.

Earth, are honourable, great and high in Heaven, and may do such things by Faith in Prayer, as the greatest Monarchs and Princes upon Earth cannot do by their greatest force and power: As will further appear in the second Scripture and word of Promise, which for the proof of the point, we shall also a little insist upon.

Isaiah 45. 11. Thus saith the Lord, the holy one of Israel, and his maker; Ask me of things to come, concerning my Sons, and concerning the work of my hands, command ye me. Oh the admirable and infinite condescension of the great Jehovah! who hath created the Heavens, and formed the Earth, and commandeth all the host of them! That he who commandeth Angels, and ruleth in the Armies of Heaven; and in the Kingdoms of men, should suffer himself to be commanded by a hand-full of poor praying-souls here on earth! and to have such power in Heaven, as to command and dispose of the great works of providence; yea the choicest and most admirable operations.

operations thereof, which for the rarity and excellency are (by way of eminency) the works of Gods hands (as the *Egyptian* Magicians said of that rare and admirable work of Gods singular power and providence, in turning all the dust of the Land of *Egypt* into Lice at the word of his servant *Moses*, which the Magicians could not do by their enchantments, *Exod. 8. 19.* (*This is the finger of God*) Yet so it is, that a hand-full of Gods praying *Israel*, which come in Faith, to enquire and ask of God concerning his Sons and Daughters, may even command what they will, may ask and have the greatest mercies, the most signal deliverances, and the most wonderfull revolutions of providence that the hands, *i. e.* the infinite power of God is able to produce, and bring to pass. As that was a most wonderful revolution of providence, that caused even all the earth to stand amazed, even the sudden and unexpected downfall of the mighty Kingdom of *Babylon*, in order to the salvation and deliverance of Gods Church and people, who there were holden

holden in so strong captivity, *Isa.* 14. from the 3. v. to the 28.

Oh ye precious praying-souls, upon whom the Lord hath poured out the spirit of grace and supplication, that ye may see him whom ye have pierced, and mourn, and be in bitterness for your own sins, and the sins of the Nation; mourning even every family apart, the men apart, and their wives apart, *Zech.* 12. 10, 11, 12. Oh know, that if ye come with an humble sence of your own, and the Nations sins, and with Faith in God through Jesus Christ, to plead his precious promises, and ask of him things to come concerning his Sons and Daughters, ye may even command what ye will (if it be a work of Gods hands, which he hath decreed in Heaven, and declared on Earth to bring to pass in due time, as he hath the confusion of Mystical *Babylon*, and salvation of his spiritual *Zion* *Rev.* 18. 2.) I say, if it be a work of his hands, i. e. within the power of his glorious arm, and infinite wisdom, to effect, as most certainly all things prophesied

ed and fore-told in the Word of God are; then you need not to stagger, ye need not to hesitate about the matter, either because of your own unworthiness, or the great amazing difficulties in the way of the promise; but come boldly to the throne of grace, and ask in Faith, and there is nothing in Heaven or in the Earth too good or too great for God to do for you; ask and spare not, yea speak the word and it shall be done, command with an humble boldness, and it shall be brought forth; ask it in the Heaven above, or in the earth beneath; amongst all the glorious works and operations of Gods hands, chuse where ye will, ask what you will, and it shall be done for you. *Ask me things to come concerning my Sons, and concerning the works of my hands, command ye me.*

2. The most precious and constant experiences of the Saints and servants of God in all ages and generations of the world, do also abundantly declare the mighty prevailing power and efficacy of Faith in prayer; by which,

1. They

1. They have prevailed with God for the turning away of his fierce wrath and anger from ungodly Nations, who had provoked him greatly, and yet perished not, because some of Gods faithfull servants stood up in the gap, and made intercession for them.

Thus holy *Moses* prevaieth with God for *Israel*, when they provoked him to wrath with their own inventions and turned the glory of God into the similitude of a Calf that eateth Hay, *Exod. 32. 7.* And the Lord said unto *Moses*, Go get thee down, for the people which thou broughtest out of the Land of Egypt, have corrupted themselves; they have turned aside quickly out of the way which I commanded them; they have made them a molten Calf, and have worshiped it, &c. And vers. 10. Now therefore, let me alone, that my wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them, and I will make of thee a great Nation.

Here is an ungodly and unthankful Nation.

Nation, that have greatly provoked the Lord by their Idolatry and Apostacy, after all those wonders of mercy, which he had wrought for them in *Egypt*, and at the Red Sea, which was a great aggravation of their wickedness, that they so quickly forgot God their Saviour, and turned aside to other Gods, and gave the glory of all their deliverances and salvations, which *Jehovah* had wrought for them, unto a base, detestable Idol, the Image of a Calf that eateth Hay: So *vers. 8.* *They have made a Molten Calf, and worshiped it, and have sacrificed thereunto, and said, These be thy Gods, O Israel, which have brought thee up out of the Land of Egypt.*

And here we have a jealous, offended and provoked God, appearing upon the Mount to *Moses* as consuming fire, taking up thoughts of wrath and indignation against *Israel*, even to their utter destruction and confusion: Now therefore, let me alone, that my wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them, and I will make of thee a great Nation.

But

But withall, behold a wonder of infinite condescention, *God stooping to man, the great Jehovah courting and intreating a Poor, weak, sinfull man, to be silent, and let him alone in the progress and execution of his anger against Israel! Let me alone that my wrath may wax hot against them; As if Moses's prayers did tye up the hands of God, so that he could not do any thing against Israel, without Moss's leave.*

Oh that a poor sinful man, as *Moses* was, should have such power with the great and holy God! yet such is the efficacy of Faith in prayer, that God will not, cannot do any thing against the prayers of his people, when they ask in Faith.

But now doth *Moses* let God alone, and cease to pray, and make intercession for *Israel*? is *Moses* content to accept the promised increase of his own private family, with so great dishonour to the Name of God, and the universal ruine of his Church and people? No verily: The Faith and
Zeal

Zeal of this holy man *Moses*, like a mighty fire being a little restrained, breaketh forth into the greater flames. And he sets upon the work of prayer and intercession for *Israel* with the more Faith and fervent Zeal, *vers. 12. 13.* And *Moses* besought the Lord his God, and said; Lord, why doth thy wrath wax hot against thy People, which thou hast brought forth out of the Land of Egypt, with great power, and with a mighty hand? Wherefore should the Egyptians speak and say, for mischief did he bring them out, to slay them in the Mountains, and to consume them from the face of the Earth? Turn from thy fierce wrath, and repent of this evil against thy People. Remember *Abraham*, *Isaac* and *Israel* thy servants, to whom thou swarest by thy own self, and saidst unto them, I will multiply your seed as the stars of Heaven, and all this Land that I have spoken of, will I give unto your seed, and they shall inherit it for ever.

Oh here is a prayer of Faith indeed! here is much Faith acted by *Moses* in this prayer; looking to the Word and Promise of God made to *Abraham*, *Isaac* and *Jacob*, as his Rule in asking,

ing, and the glory of the Name of God, as his great and ultimate end, and by good argument and strength of reason shewing, that to execute his fierce wrath in consuming his people, would neither consist with his Covenant and Promise, nor with the glory of his own great Name, and therefore prays the Lord to turn from his fierce wrath, and repent of this evil against his people.

And by this Prayer of Faith he prevails with God, and delivers *Israel* from that consuming wrath and anger of God that was kindled against them, so that they perished not in their iniquity, as *vers. 14* *And the Lord repented of the evil which he thought to do unto his people.*

Which famous Prayer and Intercession of *Moses* is recorded in the book of *Psalms*, and mentioned as the only means of *Israel's* preservation from the consuming power of *Jehovah's* great wrath and fierce anger, *Psal. 106. 23.* *Therefore he said that he would destroy them; had not Moses his chosen stood before*

before him in the breach to turn away his wrath lest he should destroy them.

Oh the prevailing power and efficacy of Faith in Prayer! that by one Prayer of Faith, a whole Nation should be delivered from so great a ruine!

2. *Instance* Thus also righteous Lot by one Prayer of Faith delivered Zoar from the common destruction and overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah, that very morning when fire was ready to come down from Heaven to destroy those Cities, Gen. 19. 18. *And Lot said unto them, oh not so my Lord; Behold now thy servant hath found grace in thy sight, and thou hast magnified thy mercy which thou hast shewed unto me in saving my life, and I cannot escape to the mountain, lest some evil take me, and I dye. Behold now, this City is near to flee unto, and it is a little one. O let me escape thither (is it not a little one?) and my soul shall live.*

This Prayer of Lot was not without

out some visible tincture of humane frailty, and weakness of Faith, wherein he offended in that he accepted not the place which the Lord had appointed, but chuseth another, ascribing more to the place, than to the power and good pleasure of God for his protection. Nevertheless it being a Prayer of Faith, in which there was a real exercise of Faith, in that he believed God was able to spare *Zoar*, and to make it a means of his preservation and more comfortable living than the desolate mountain, and therefore Prays that the Lord would not send him to the mountain, but rather let him flee to *Zoar*. In which Prayer holy *Lot* was questionless guided by the Spirit of God, to ask the preservation of that City, which though visibly threatned, and in danger to be destroyed with the rest, yet was in respect of Gods secret Will and Purpose, to be preserved, and therefore the Lord did by his holy Spirit put it into the heart of his righteous servant *Lot*, to ask that City: In which request he is presently accepted, and the life of that City granted at his petition,

petition, verse 21. *And he said unto him: see, I have accepted thee concerning this thing, that I will not overthrow this City for thee which thou hast spoken: Haste thee, escape thither, for I cannot do any thing till thou be come thither; therefore the Name of that City was called Zoar.*

Oh the infinite and admirable condescension of the great and holy God to the weakness of a poor frail man! that *Lot* should not accept the mountain which the Lord appointed him, and yet that the Lord should accept *Lot*, and spare *Zoar* which he had spoken for! yet such is the holy indulgence of the heavenly Father to his Praying Children, that when through humane frailty, they cannot come up to his terms, he out of Divine pity stoops and comes down to theirs! and such is the efficacy and prevailing force of Faith in Prayer, that God is even overcome thereby to grant his poor Praying servants even what they will! ver. 21. *See I have accepted thee concerning this thing, that I will not overthrow this City, for the which thou hast spoken:*

Oh

Oh well was it for *Zoar* that *Lot* spoke to God for it! The Prayer of one just *Lot* delivers this wicked City from the common calamity and destruction of their fellow sinners!

2. The Saints and Servants of God have prevailed by Faith in Prayer pulling down most speedy vengeance, and just judgments of God upon their malicious and ungodly Enemies.

Thus zealous *Elijah* by Prayer brings down fire from Heaven upon the Heads of his proud and malicious Enemies (two several Captains and their fifties) who in the pride and heat of their Spirits, came to do violence to the good Prophet, 2 King. I. 9, 10, 11, 12. untill by these examples of Gods severity, the rest of that wicked party were reduced to some submission and moderation towards his faithful servant, who in Prophecying the Death of the King of *Samaria*, had not offended, but done that which he was commanded, and allowed of God to do.

And the same holy man *Elijah*, by Prayer

Prayer prevails with God to shut the Heavens, that it rained not for three years and six months, so that wicked *Ahab*, *Jezebel*, and the ten Tribes were for their Idolatry, and persecution of Gods faithful servants, justly plagued with a three years famine, *1 King. 17. 1.* compared with *James 5. 16, 17.* *The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much. Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain, and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months.*

Thus also the holy Prophet *Elisha* prevails with God by Faith in prayer for the smiting of the King of Syria's Army with blindness, *2 King. 6. 18.* *And when they came down to him, Elisha prayed unto the Lord, and said, Smite this people, I pray thee, with blindness; And he smote them with blindness, according to the Word of Elisha.*

Thus also the two faithful witnesses under the New Testament which the Lord raiseth up to prophesie and bear witness

witness against Antichrist 1260 days, that is all the time of the beasts reign and tyranny (for so long he is to continue, *Rev. 13. 6.*) have power to pull down vengeance upon their enemies, and to open and shut Heaven, and smite the earth with plagues, as oft as they will, *Rev. 11. 5, 6.* And if any man will hurt them, fire procedeth out of their mouths, and devoureth their enemies. And if any man will hurt them, he must in this manner be killed. These have power to shut Heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy, and have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to smite the earth with plagues, as often as they will.

See here what great Power the Lord hath given to his witness-bearing Saints and servants under the New Testament! whom he raiseth to bear witness for Christ against Antichrist, to protest and prophecy against all the abominations of the man of sin; though they have no worldly power, nor arm of flesh to protect them, yet they are not left destitute, for they have power to shut Heaven, and

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to smite the Earth with plagues, and to call for vengeance, and the righteous judgments of God to be made manifest upon their enemies, for which cause fire is said to proceed out of their mouth ; not materially, but virtually, *i. e.* they do by their prayers and prophecies which proceed out of their mouths, procure vengeance from Heaven, and all the plagues and righteous judgments of God to be poured forth of the vials of his wrath upon the Antichristian party, who are their malicious and implacable enemies : by which means they are preserved and protected in their witness-bearing-work, all the time of their Prophecy, untill the end and finishing thereof ; at which time by the determinate counsell of God, they are to be slain, and lye dead for a season, in order to a glorious resurrection, *Rev. II. 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13.*

3. The Saints and servants of God have obtained by Faith in prayer, great and wonderful deliverances, when they have been in the greatest danger

danger, yea even in the very jaws of destruction.

1. Great and marvellous personal deliverances have been obtained by Faith in Prayer, or by the Faithful Prayers of the righteous.

Thus that precious and faithful servant of God, *Hezekiah*, when he was sick unto the death, and had received a peremptory sentence of death by the mouth of the Prophet, *Isa. 38. 1. Set thy house in order, for thou shalt dye, and not live*, by Faith in Prayer obtained the reversal of that sentence, and was delivered in a most wonderful manner from the very jaws of death, *verse 5. Go and say to Hezekiah, Thus saith the Lord, the God of David thy Father, I have heard thy prayer, I have seen thy tears: behold I will add unto thy days fifteen years.* Which deliverance was (all circumstances considered) so marvellous and wonderful, that the fame thereof sounded as far as *Babylon*; the King whereof sent his Embassadors to congratulate the Kings recovery, and to enquire of the wonder, *2 Chron. 32. 31.*

Thus also the good Prophet *Jonah* (though an angry passionate man) when he Prayed to the Lord in the fishes belly, and when he was even swallowed up of death, without all visible help or hope of deliverance, by Faith in Prayer obtained a wonderful deliverance at the hands of God, who spake to the fish, and it vomited up *Jonah* upon the dry Land, *Jonah* 2. 10. of which Prayer of his in the fishes belly, and the great salvation obtained thereby, take his own confession, *Jonah* 2. 2, 5, 6, 7. *And I cried by reason of mine affliction unto the Lord, and he heard me; out of the belly of Hell cried I, and thou heardest my voice: The waters compassed me about even to the soul; the depth closed me round about, the Weeds were wrapt about my head. I went down to the bottom of the mountains; the Earth with her bars was about me forever: yet hast thou brought up my life from corruption, O Lord my God. When my soul fainted within me, I remembered the Lord, and my Prayer came in unto thee, into thy Holy Temple.*

Thus the holy man *Peter* also, being shut up in Prison by *Herod*, and bound with

with two chains, kept all night between two Souldiers. the keepers also standing before the door; being as a sheep fast bound and appointed for the slaughter next morning; by the Prayers of the Church at *Jerusalem* was wonderfully delivered from death, and rescued out of the hand of his enemies by an Angel, *Act. 12. 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12.*

2. Great, National, and publick deliverances have also been obtained at the hands of God by the faithful Prayers of his people.

Thus was *Jerusalem* and the whole Church of God delivered from the cruel rage, great power, and proud threatenings of the King of *Assyria*, by the Prayer of *Hezekiah* (an Army of a hundred fourscore and five thousand being slain by the Angel of the Lord in one night) *Isa. 37. 21.* Then *Isaiah* the Son of *Amos* sent unto *Hezekiah*, saying, Thus saith the Lord God of *Israel*; whereas thou hast prayed to me against *Sennacherib* King of *Assyria*, ver. 33. Therefore thus saith the Lord concerning the King of *Assyria*;

He shall not come into this City, nor shoot an Arrow there, and come before it with shields, nor cast a bank against it, by the way that he came, by the same shall he return, and shall not come into this City, saith the Lord: for I will defend this City to save it, for my own sake, and for my servant Davids sake. And ver. 36. Then the Angel of the Lord went forth and smote in the Camp of the Assyrians an hundred and fourscore and five thousand, and when they arose early in the morning, behold they were all dead Corps.

Oh the admirable and wonderful strength of Faith in Prayer! that one Praying Faithful Saint of God should prevail more by one Prayer of Faith, than the greatest Conquerors in the World could ever do by force and power! a hundred and fourscore and five thousand slain by the prayers of one man! one *Hezekiah* Prays, and the whole Church of God is delivered!

Thus also when proud *Haman* that wicked enemy of the people of God had conspired the utter ruine and destruction of the Jews, in the days of the captivity; and the design was laid
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so sure (the Kings Royall assent being obtained, and the decree gone forth into to all the Kings Provinces, and the day set for the execution thereof) that it was impossible in the eye of reason, that it should be disappointed, yet by the prayers of good *Mordecai*, and the remnant of a poor despised people, a most glorious deliverance was obtained; the Kings heart suddenly and wonderfully changed; the former decree and sentence of death reversed, *Mordecai* highly honoured and advanced, the Jews every where encouraged; wonderfully preserved, and feared by their enemies; and wicked *Haman*, their proud and implacable enemy, with all his family destroyed and rooted out of the earth, *Esther* 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, and 9, chapters.

Thus also when the children of *Ammon*, *Moab*, and *Mount-Seir*, had conspired the utter ruine of the people of God, and joyned together in a numerous and multitudinous Host, and suddenly invaded *Judah* for that end, supposing themselves to have been sure

sure enough of their design, there being no strength nor provision with *Jehosaphat*, to withstand them. A most wonderful and glorious victory and deliverance was obtained by the Prayer of good *Jehosaphat*, 2 Chron. 20. 3. And *Jehosaphat* feared, and set himself to seek the Lord, v.6. And said, O Lord God of our Fathers, art not thou God in Heaven? and rulest not thou over all the Kingdoms of the Hea-then? And in thine hand is there not power and might, so that none is able to withstand thee? Art not thou our God, who didst drive out the inhabitants of this Land before thy people Israel, and gavest it to the seed of Abraham thy friend for ever? And they dwelt therein, and have built thee a Sanctuary therein for thy Name, saying, If when evil cometh upon us, as the sword, judgment, or pestilence, or famine, we stand before this house, and in thy presence (for thy Name is in this house) and cry unto thee in our affliction, then thou wilt hear and belp. And now behold, the children of Ammon, and Moab, and Mount-Seir, whom thou wouldst not let Israel invade, when they came out of the Land of Egypt, but they turn-
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ed from them, and destroyed them not Behold (I say) how they reward us, to come to cast us out of thy possession, which thou hast given us to inherit ; O our God, wilt thou not judge them ? for we have no might against this great company that cometh against us : neither know we what to do, but our eyes are upon thee. And all Judah stood before the Lord with their little ones, their wives and their children.

Oh here is a Prayer of Faith indeed ! there is much of the life of Faith, and strength of argument in this Prayer of good Jehoshaphat.

1. By Faith he sees and pleads the near relations betwixt God and his People *Israel*, the seed of *Abraham* his friend.

2. By Faith he presses God upon his Covenant and Promise made to *Abraham*, *Isaac* and *Jacob*, by which he gave the Land of *Canaan* (which is therefore called the Land of Promise) to *Abraham* and his seed forever.

3. By Faith he acknowledgeth and emproveth the soveraignty and ruling power which God keepeth in his own hand over all the Kingdoms of the world, yea over the very Hea-then, and those that are the enemies of his Church and People; and therefore is able at all times to frustrate their deepest Councils, & disappoint their greatest designs, bridle their greatest rage and power, so as to deliver his People, that put their trust in him.

4. By Faith he pleads the special Covenant and Promise of God made to *Solomon* on the behalf of his People at the dedication of the Temple, and applies it to the Present Case in Hand.

5. By Faith he improves the various passages of providence, clearing up the innocency and integrity of his People *Israel*, and the righteousness of their cause, and on the contrary, declareth the guiltiness, ingratitude, and wickedness of these ungodly nations that were now combined together to seek the ruine of *Israel*.

And

And upon the whole leaves the case with God, as a most righteous Judge holy, faithfull, and able to plead the case of his poor People in this great distress.

And prevails so far with God by this prayer of Faith, that he hath a gracious answer, and a most glorious return in the wonderful Salvation of the Church and People of God for whom he prayed, and in the utter destruction and overthrow of their potent enemies, against whom he prayed: for *vers. 14.* Then, upon *Jahaziel*, &c. came the Spirit of the Lord in the midst of the Congregation. And he said, Thus saith the Lord unto you, Be not afraid nor dismayed by reason of this great multitude, for the battel is not yours, but Gods. And *ver. 17.* Ye shall not need to fight in this battle: set your selves, stand ye still and see the Salvation of the Lord with you. And *vers. 22.* When they began to sing and to praise, the Lord set ambushments against the children of Ammon, Moab, and Mount-Seir, which were come against Judah, and they were smitten, for the children of Ammon,

Ammon and Moab stood up against the Inhabitants of Mount-Seir, utterly to slay and destroy them : And when they had made an end of the Inhabitants of Seir, every one helped to destroy another. And when Judah came toward the watch tower in the wilderness, they looked unto the multitude, and behold they were dead bodies fallen to the earth, and none escaped. And vers. 25. When Jehosaphat and his People came to take the spoil of them, they found among them in abundance, both riches, with the dead bodies, and precious Jewels (which they Stript off for themselves) more than they could carry away, and they were three days in gathering of the spoil, it was so much.

Oh what a wonderful deliverance and salvation was here obtained by one Prayer of Faith ! Good Jehosaphat Prays in Faith, and prevails by Prayer with God ; The enemies are divided one against another, and utterly destroyed one by another ; Israel saved with a wonderful salvation, and greatly enriched with the spoil of their enemies !

4. The Saints and Servants of God by Faith in Prayer, have prevailed with God for the stopping the course, and changing the very Law of nature in his government of the Creatures, so that they have at the command of God been serviceable to his Church and People, not onely beyond, but even against the course and law of nature.

1. *Instance.* So holy Joshua by Faith in Prayer, commands the Sun and Moon to stand still, and stay their course, until he had avenged the Lords People upon their enemies, Josh. 10. 12. Then spake Joshua to the Lord in the day when the Lord delivered up the Amorites before the children of Israel. And he said in the sight of Israel, Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon, and thou Moon in the valley of Ajalon. And vers. 13. The Sun stood still, and the Moon stayed until the People had avenged themselves upon their enemies. Is not this written in the book of Joshua? So the Sun stood still in the midst of Heaven, and hastened not to go down about

a whole day! And *vers. 14.* There was no day like that before it, or after it, that the Lord hearkened to the voice of a man, for the Lord fought for Israel.

Oh the wonderful force, and prevailing Efficacy of Faith in Prayer! that even the course and law of nature (which no creature can resist or withstand) should thereby be stayed! *Job 38. 31, 32, 33, 34, 35. Ezek. 1. 17.* And the Sun and the Moon (which by the ordinance of God are to be in continual motion, and move with such wonderful speed, as to compass the world in the vast circumference of the Heavens in a few hours) should at the word of a poor frail man, stand still, and stay their course for the space of a whole day! *Psal. 19. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6.*

2. *Instance* Thus also holy *Moses* prevails with the Lord by Prayer, for the dividing the waters of the Sea, even the Red Sea, so that (contrary to the law and course of nature) they stood up on an heap, and were a wall to Israel on the right hand, and

and on the left, *Exod. 14. 15, 16.*
*And the Lord said unto Moses, Where-
fore cryest thou unto me? Speak unto the
children of Israel that they go forward.
But lift up thou thy Rod, and stretch
out thine hand over the Sea, and di-
vide it, and the children of Israel shall
go on dry ground thorow the midst of the
Sea. And vers. 22. The children of
Israel went into the midst of the Sea up-
on the day ground, and the waters were
a wall unto them on their right hand,
and on their left.*

Oh the admirable and marvellous
strength and power of Faith in Pray-
er! that by it the waters of the Sea,
the depths of the Sea should be di-
vided, and made to stand upon heaps,
as a wall to Gods *Israel*! and yet so it
is; *Moses* cryeth to the Lord at the
Sea, even the Red Sea, and the
waters are divided, and become a
wall to *Israel* in their passage towards
Canaan, on the right hand, and on
the left!

All which (with many other
blessed experiences of the Saints
which

which might be instanced in) do amount to a sufficient testimony and witness to the truth in hand ; and do abundantly evince the truth of this blessed promise of the Lord Jesus to his poor servants here on earth : *And all things whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive.*

The grounds and reasons of the point upon which this great truth is established, and wherein the evidence and demonstrations thereof do yet more fully appear, are briefly these three.

1. *Reason.* The Prayers of Faith, or believing Prayers of the Saints and Servants of God here on Earth, are Heaven-born. They are influenced from Heaven by the conduct and guidance of the holy Spirit, whose office it is to influence and manage the Saints in this great concern and work of Prayer : So that the things which they ask of God in Prayer, (when they ask in Faith) are not so much the fruit of the inward breathings, and unfeigned desires of their own hearts and spirits, as of the holy and blessed Spirit of Grace breathing in them, and teaching

ing them to pray as they ought which of themselves they neither know, nor can do, *Rom. 8. 26.* Likewise, the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities : for we know not what we should pray for as we ought : But the Spirit it self maketh intercession for us, with groanings which cannot be uttered : And he that searcheth the heart, knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the Saints, according to the will of God.

So that the holy Spirit of God doth not only help and assist the Saints in the right manner of prayer, exciting their Graces, quickening and drawing out their affections, helping them to right ends and aims in Prayer (all which are also necessarily required) but doth also suggest and teach them the very matter of their Prayers ; how and what to pray for, and ask of God, both for themselves and others : *The Spirit also helpeth our infirmities, for we know not what to pray for as we ought : But the Spirit it self, &c.* So that the Saints are taught from Heaven what to pray for as they ought ; the Spirit of God from Heaven doth teach and assist them to pray here on Earth according to the Will of God.

And

And how reproachfully and blasphemously soever wicked and ungodly men do speak of the (so called) extemporary Prayers of the Saints : yet they are no less than heaven-born ; the things which they are taught by the Spirit of God from Heaven to ask of God in Prayer. And let wicked men know, that in blaspheming and reproaching the Prayers of the Saints, they do blaspheme the Spirit it self : [*But the Spirit it self maketh intercession, &c.*] Wicked and ungodly men, who are ignorant of the Spirit of Prayer, do exceedingly magnifie and cry up their stinted forms, and book-Prayers, because (as they imagin) composed and indited by holy and learned men, and that with the deepest judgment, and most serious consideration had of the things meet to be asked of God in Prayer : And do condemn the prayers of Gods Saints, because (as they judge in the darkness of their carnal mind, which is always enmity against God, *Rom. 8. 7.*) extemporary, rash, and inconsiderate, without any deep consideration and matter prepared

prepared before-hand : but let such know, that the best of their stinted Forms and Book-Prayers, are but indited by men on earth ; and on the other hand, the prayers of Gods Saints and servants offered up in Faith (though extemporary) are indited by the Spirit of God in Heaven, and given in immediatly by the Ministrati-
on of the Gospel of the holy Spirit, who knoweth better what is meet to be asked of God in Prayer, (ex-
temporary) than the greatest Bishops, Doctors, and learned men upon the earth can do, by their deepest consul-
tation.

And let such resolve this question ; whether are most agreeable to the will and mind of God, those prayers which are indited by the Spirit of God in Heaven, and given in from above, as all the prayers of the Saints are which they put up in Faith : or those which are composed and imposed by the carnal wisdom, and coercive power of men on earth, contrary to the Word of God ?

And

And let me add this one word more; that the Prayer of the poorest Saint, tho encompassed with utmost humane frailties and infirmities, yet being breathed by the holy Spirit into his heart, and breathed out again in Faith by the help of the same Spirit, hath more of heavenly wisdom, and true spiritual excellency in it, than the most magnified and admired Form that ever was composed by the greatest Doctors, and learned men in the world: For *Joh. 3. 6. That which is born of the flesh, is flesh: and that which is born of the Spirit, is Spirit.* And again, *vers 31. He that is of the earth, is earthly, and speaketh of the earth; he that cometh from Heaven is above all.* As Jesus Christ came from Heaven, and therefore was above all the Prophets and Apostles: so also the Spirit of God cometh from Heaven, and is above all the Doctors, Bishops, and learned men in the world, in teaching us how and what to pray for as we ought.

And hence it is, that true Spiritual and Heavenly prayer, is distinguished
from

from all hypocritical shews, and pretences of prayer by this character, *Ephes. 6. 18. Praying always, with all Prayer and Supplication in the Spirit.* True Prayer and Supplication is always in the Spirit. And again, *Jude 20. Praying in the Holy Ghost.*

The sum and close of the matter, is, Prayers of Faith do come from God, and therefore must needs prevail with God ; prayers of Faith are Heaven-born, and therefore must needs find acceptance there.

2. *Reason.* The Prayers of Faith, or the believing prayers of the Saints and People of God, do always fall in with the Will of God : The stinted Forms, and composed Prayers of formal Hypocritical pretenders to Religion, do always in one thing or other run counter to the Will of God. In the very matter of their Petitions, it being impossible that such as keep themselves to a stinted Form of Prayer, and oblige themselves to use such a form of words in prayer, and no other, should avoid this Rock (upon which they must inevitably fall and split them-

themselves) that the things which they so ask, must of necessity run cross to the will of God : let them take what Form they will, and stint themselves to the constant use of it (as the Hypocrites do) and experience will quickly teach them, that in so doing they must contradict the revealed Will of God in their Petitions ; and therefore such prayers must needs be very fruitless.

But the prayers of the sincere children of God, which are indeed prayers of Faith, and the breathings of Gods own Spirit in them, do always concur, and fall in with the Will of God : And as he that searcheth the heart knoweth what is the mind of the spirit, in the hearts of his children: so the Spirit searcheth all things, yea the deep things of God, *Rom. 8. 27. Because he, (i.e. the holy Spirit of God) maketh intercession for the Saints, according to the will of God. 1 Cor. 2. 10, 11.*

Faith looks at the Will of God as her rule in asking ; and in things about which the Will of God is revealed, Faith will be positive, and ask absolutely without an if : but in things about which the Will of God is yet secret and unknown, Faith will ask with submission

to the will of God. *Not my will, but thy will be done*, is the language of Faith in such cases. And it is as impossible for Faith to err in this particular, and to miss of the will of God in asking, as it is for the Sun in the Firmament, to mistake his way in his heavenly perambulation: or for the waters of the Rivers to mistake their way into the Sea, that they should not come into, and coincitate with the Ocean.

Whatsoever therefore the Saints do ask in Faith, they do ask according to the Will of God, whether it be secret or revealed; For the rule which Faith looks at, is an unerring rule, *viz.* the whole light of Scripture-revelation. And the conduct and guide by which Faith is directed in asking, is an unerring guide, even the holy Spirit of God, *Rom. 8 26.* which perfectly knoweth and searcheth what is the mind and will of God in all cases, whether secret or manifest.

And it is worthy observation, how the poor Saints of God are oft times, by a secret instinct and conduct of the Spirit guided

guided in prayer, to ask those very things of God, which he is about to do and bring to pass, beyond what is revealed or made known.

As when *Lot* asked of God in Prayer, the preservation of the City *Zoar*, which was threatned, and in visible danger of perishing in the common destruction of *Sodom* and *Gomorrhah*, and yet was preserved by the prayer of righteous *Lot*, who was questionless guided in his asking that City above any other, by the secret instinct of the Spirit, who knew what was the secret will and purpose of God in that matter, and therefore taught *Lot* to make intercession for it according to the will of God *Gen.* 16. 19, 20, 21.

Thus also that holy woman *Hannah*, when she prayed for a Son, and in the pouring out of her spirit to the Lord in prayer, did before-hand dedicate and devote him to the Lord all his days, was questionless guided by a secret and special instinct of the spirit, to ask of God that very thing that was in the heart and purpose of
God

God concerning her and her Son, though as yet secret and unknown, 1 Sam. I. 10, 11.

Thus also the last Martyrs that suffered in the *Marian* days, were taught from Heaven by the secret conduct of the Spirit, to ask of God in Prayer that they might be the last that should suffer in that manner, and that the Lord would put an end to the afflictions of his people. And were in that Petition graciously heard and answered: for presently the life of that wicked Queen was cut off by the hand of God: And though many others were condemned, and warrants issued out for the burning of them, yet the tidings of the Queens death stay-ed the execution, and those precious Souls were, according to their Petition, the last that suffered in that bloody persecution. *Fox Martyrol.* vol. 3. p. 893.

Whatever therefore the Saints do ask of God in Prayer, by the help of his holy Spirit, and by Faith in the Name of Jesus Christ, they do ask according to his Will, and therefore must needs prevail in Heaven, and have such petitions granted and fulfilled on Earth, 1 Joh. 5. 14, 15. *And this is the confidence that*

we have in him, that if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us. And if we know that he heareth us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the Petitions that we desired of him.

3. Reason The Prayers of the Saints offered up in Faith, do fall under the blessing of the mediation and intercession of Jesus Christ, that great High Priest over the House of God, who is entred into the Heavens, even Jesus the Son of God, whose office it is to offer up the prayers of all the Saints with the spiritual incense of his merits, whereby they do become acceptable to God, *Heb. 4. 14, 16.*

It pertained to the office, and was the custom of the Priests under the Law to enter within the vail, and offer up the sweet Incense with the prayers of the Congregation, who usually were without the door of the Tabernacle, praying at the time of Incense: *Exod. 30. 6, 7. Levit. 16. 12.* And the time of the Priests offering up Incense was observed by the Congregation as a special time and season for prayer. *Luke 1. 8, 9, 10.* And all this was to typifie and point out something of the priestly and Mediatorial Office of Jesus Christ, who is now en-
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tred within the vail, into the holy of holies, *i. e.* the heavenly places themselves, there to appear in the presence of God for us, as a *Priest for ever, after the order of Melchisedeck: Heb. 6. 19, 20. and 9. 24.* To offer up all the spiritual Sacrifices and services of the Saints unto his Father, with the sprinkling of his blood, and sweet perfume and incense of his precious merits upon them, whereby their persons, though compassed with many sins and infirmities, and their services, though weak and imperfect in themselves, are made infinitely acceptable and well pleasing unto the Father through him.

I. Their persons are made acceptable unto the Father through him, *Ephes. 1. 6. To the praise of his Glorious grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.*

Oh ye precious Saints of God, know that the acceptation of your persons with the Father, stands not in your own Saintship, and personal righteousness, but in the imputed righteousness, precious blood and merits of Jesus Christ, which is made yours by Faith: So that by the blood of Jesus ye are now made Kings and Priests unto his Father, and may

come to the throne of grace with acceptation, *Rev. 1. 5. 6.* Unto him that hath loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood: And hath made us Kings and Priests unto God and his Father; therefore ye may come boldly to the throne of grace, through the glorious intercession of Jesus your great High Priest, *Heb. 4. 14.* Seeing then that we have a great High Priest, that is passed into the Heavens, Jesus the Son of God; *Vers. 16.* Let us come boldly unto the throne of grace. And again, *Ephes. 3. 12.* In whom we have boldness and access by the Faith of him.

2. The services, and spiritual sacrifices of the Saints which they offer up to God in Faith, are acceptable to the Father through Jesus Christ, *1 Pet. 2. 5.* Ye also as lively stones are built up a spiritual-house, an holy Priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifice, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.

Where observe, that the mediation and Intercession of Jesus Christ, is the procuring cause of all the Saints acceptation with God, both as to their persons, and as to their services, which here are called spiritual sacrifice. And ye Saints of God, know, that your sacri-

sacrifices are not therefore acceptable to God, because spiritual, but because offered to God thorow Jesus Christ because sprinkled with the blood of Christ.

Now it is the nature and property of Faith to lead us out of our selves for acceptation, as well as for assistance, unto the blood, and righteousness and merits of Jesus Christ, and Faith seeks its acceptation with the Father only, and wholly through the mediation of Jesus the Son of God, *Rom. 5. 1. Isa. 45. 24. Gal. 2. 19 20.*

And therefore all the prayers of the Saints, which are put up in Faith, do come under the mediation, and glorious intercession of Jesus, and are offered up to the Father by the hand of Christ, who is therefore called the Angel of the Covenant, and said to stand before the Altar, *i. e. the Incense Altar*, because he offereth up continually the Prayers of the Saints with his own hand, perfumed with the Incense of his own merits unto the Father, *Rev. 8. 3, 4. And another Angel came and stood at the Altar, having a golden Censer. And there was given unto him much Incense, that he should offer it with the Prayers of all the Saints upon*

the golden Altar which was before the Throne : And the smoke of the Incense which came with the Prayers of the Saints, ascended up before God, out of the Angels hand.

Oh needs must the prayers of Faith, the believing prayers of all the Saints ascend up before God, and prevail in Heaven, which are offered up by the hand of this blessed Angel, even Jesus, who is before the Throne, And is there continually ! so that it is always the time of Incense with the Congregation of Gods praying People ; for this blessed Angel is day and night before the Throne, offering up their prayers with the pure Incense of his merits : Jesus the Mediator and High Priest of our profession, is alway within the vail, carrying on this part of his Priestly office in Heaven, *Heb. 7. 25. Seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.*

1. Use. If the Efficacy of Faith in Prayer be such, that the Saints may thereby prevail in Heaven : And that all things, whatsoever they shall ask in prayer, believing, they shall receive ; then wo be to all such as have the prayers of the Saints justly engaged against them. It is easier to stand before the greatest.

Armies

Armies, before the combined powers and policies of the greatest Monarchs and Princes in the world, than to stand before the prayers of two or three poor Saints, who pray in Faith, and cry day and night to God for help against their wicked persecutors.

'Tis storied of the Champions, and Worthies of the Old Testament, among other worthy deeds, and great things which they did by Faith: That by it they put to flight the Armies of the Aliens, and subdued Kingdoms, *Heb. 11. 33. Who through Faith subdued Kingdoms, stopped the mouths of Lyons, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword; out of weakness were made strong; waxed valiant in fight; turned to flight the Armies of the Aliens.* By Faith, *i. e.* by prayers of Faith; for they cryed unto the Lord in their straits, and under the great oppressions and tyranny of their enemies, they prayed to the Lord for help against them: And by Faith in Prayer they obtained help from God against their persecutors.

Their Enemies were wonderfully
 brought under, mighty Kingdoms sub-
 dued, and whole Armies strangely con-

quered, and shamefully put to flight.

Sometimes without means; as *Pharaoh* and all his Host at the Red Sea, *Exod.* 14. 27, 28.

Sometimes by weak and contemptible means; as *Sisera* fell by the hand of a woman, *Judges* 4. 21. And King *Herod* that bloody persecutor, died by Worms or Lice, *Act.* 12. 23. And the whole Army of the *Midianites* with the *Amalekites*, and all the Children of the East, who lay upon the ground like Grasshoppers (so great was their multitude) were put to flight by the dream of a Barley Cake tumbling into the Host of *Midian*, *Judg.* 5. 12, 13, 14

Sometimes by contrary means, against the very Law of nature, friendship, and natural affection. So proud and blasphemous *Sennacherib* fell by his own Sons, whilst he was worshiping in the house of *Nisroch* his God, *Isa.* 37. 38. who were wonderfully over-ruled by the power and providence of God, even against the Law of nature and Religion, to execute the wrath of God; and avenge the cause of his praying people upon this proud and wicked persecutor. So also the children of *Moab*, *Ammon*, and *Mount-Seir*, who were

were confederate against Judah, were by the just judgment of God at the prayer of good *Jehosaphat*, given up to such a spirit of division and hatred amongst themselves, that they fully set themselves to destroy one another, and ceased not till there was not one of them left, *2 Chron* 20. 23, 24.

Sometimes by preternatural and extraordinary means, where ordinary means have failed. Thus the five Kings and their Armies that fought against *Joshuah* were subdued and destroyed chiefly by hailstones from Heaven. *Josh*. 10. 10, 11. and thus the King of *Assyria's* Army, consisting of an hundred and fourscore and five thousand, were slain in one night by the hand of an Angel, *Isa*. 27. 36. Thus the mouths of those greedy and roaring Lions were stopped by an Angel, that they could not so much as touch *Daniel*, *Dan*. 6. 22. And the burning destroying power of the fiery Furnace so quenched by the glorious presence of the Son of God, that it had no power so much as to singe the garments, or hair of the heads of those three worthies, *Shadrach*, *Meshach*, and *Abednego*. *Dan*. 3. 25, 26, 27.

So that the greatest Monarchs, Princes, Generals, Armies, and Kingdom of the world, have not been able to stand before the Prayers of the Saints of God, when they have prayed in Faith, and cryed to the Lord for help against them!

Wo therefore be unto all those against whom the Elect of God do cry for vengeance day and night! 'Tis not in the power of the greatest worldly force and policy to secure them from the revenging hand of God: No, but such must certainly fall before the prayers of Gods Elect, *Luke 18. 7, 8. And shall not God avenge his own Elect, which cry day and night unto him; though he bear long with them (i. e. with the persecutors) I tell you that he will avenge them speedily.*

Oh that therefore the Kings and Princes, and Rulers of the Earth would be wise and take heed how by persecuting and oppressing the People of God, they constrain them to cry to Heaven against them! 'Tis blessed counsel which the Spirit of God gives by the mouth of his servant *David*, *Psal. 2. 10. Be wise now therefore, O ye Kings, be instructed, ye Judges of the Earth: Serve the Lord with fear, and*
rejoyce

rejoyce with trembling. Kifs the Son; lest he be angry, and ye perish in the way: When his wrath is kindled but a little, blessed are all they that put their trust in him.

2. Use. What a great mercy and blessing then are the Saints and People of God to the Nations, and Kingdoms. and Countries where they live; who as so many Princes, or rather Kings and Priests, have power with God; and can by Faith in prayer prevail with him for any thing?

What a mercy was one praying *Moses* to the Nation of *Israel*, when they had provoked the Lord to jealousy by the golden Calf? *Psal 106. 23.*

What a great mercy was one praying *Lot* to the City *Zoar*, which should have been destroyed with *Sodom* and *Gomorrhah*, had not *Lot* prayed for it? *Gen. 19. 21.*

What a great blessing was holy *Jacob* (who was a great wrestler with God in Prayer, and as a Prince, had power with God, and prevailed, and upon that account had his Name changed from *Jacob* to *Israel*) what a mercy I say was he to the whole Family of his Uncle *Laban*, whilst he sojourned there? *Gen. 32, 24, 28. Gen. 30. 27.* That

That speech of the Lord to King *Abimelech*, and his People, concerning *Abraham* a poor traveller and stranger, who came but to sojourn in his Country for a time, is very remarkable, *Gen. 20. 7.* Now therefore restore the man his Wife; for he is a Prophet, and he shall pray for thee, and thou shalt live. Wrath was gone out from the Lord against King *Abimelech* and his People. And the prayers of *Abraham*, a poor stranger, prevail in Heaven for the life of *Abimelech*, who otherways was but a dead man, and for those in his house, whose wombs were fast closed up, because of *Sarah Abraham's* Wife, whom *Abimelech* had sinfully taken to him. *Gen. 20. 3. 17. 18.* Their own sin (not *Abraham's* sojourning) had procured wrath against them. And *Abraham* by Prayer Procureth sparing and healing mercy for them! A sinning Court, who daily provoke the Lord against themselves and subjects, had need of some praying souls daily to interceed for them!

How great therefore is the errour of the wicked; who look upon the People of God as the onely troublers of their *Israel* 1 *Kin. 18. 17.* and attribute the cause of all their calamities & troubles to the Lords faithful servants;

servants ; which they procure unto themselves by their own wickedness : Justly therefore may the Lords People answer such *Ahabs*, in the words of that old Non-conformist & good Prophet *Elijah*, *1 Kin. 18. 18. We have not troubled Israel, but thou, and thy Fathers house, in that ye have forsaken the Commandments of the Lord, and thou hast followed Baalim !* 'Tis not the Zealous and Conscientious Non-conformist, that troubles the Court and Country, but the Idolatrous and superstitious party, who cast off the Commandments of the Lord, and set up their own inventions, and as a greater aggravation of their wickedness, would compel others to sin with them, *Psal. 106. 29. Rev. 13. 12, 15, 16.*

Oh that therefore the eyes of the Nations, of the Kings and Judges of the earth were opened to discern aright, and to see who are the troublers of *Israel*, and who are the chariots and horsemen thereof : Well ! that blessed day is a coming, wherein the Kings of the earth even shall hate that scarlet whore, and tear her flesh and burn her with fire, even so *Amen*, *Rev. 17. 16, 17.* The good Lord hasten it in his due time, and let all the Saints say, *come Lord Jesus, come quickly.* Well then !

then ! whatever wicked men say, whatever proud men say out of the blindness, and hardness, and unbelief of their hearts; yet the Zealous and Conscientious Non-conformists are not the troublers of *Israel*, but the Chariots and Horse-men thereof: Are not the Kings enemies, but his and their Countries best friends; and wicked men will be found at last to be the worst subjects and enemies both to their King and Country. 2. *King* 2. 12. *Rev.* 16. 13, 14. *Rev.* 19. 19, 20, 21.

Let the Nations, Kings and Princes of the earth therefore know, that 'tis their best interest to cherish, protect and encourage a praying and a holy People, though they cannot in all things conform to their Laws and customs in the matters of Gods most holy worship, about which the holy God is so jealous, and his People so truly and tenderly Conscientious, *Exod.* 20. 5. *Dan.* 3. 17, 18. and 6. 10. And the prayers of such a People shall prevail more in Heaven for their King and Country, in order to their Defence and safety, than all the Chariots and Horse-men, Souldiers and Armies, Powers and Policy that the whole world can afford them.

3. *Use.* Then, O ye Saints and Servants
of

of the Most high God, who have received the spirit of Adoption, and have an interest in Jesus that great High Priest, who is entered into the Heavens for us, even Jesus the Son of God, come boldly and daily to the throne of grace, improve your interest in Heaven, and try what Faith and Prayer will do there for the help of your native Country, your poor afflicted brethren abroad in the world, for the consolation & deliverance of *Zion*, that City of God, & for the confusion and destruction of mighty *Babel*, that Mother of Harlots, and abominations of the earth, who hath corrupted the whole earth with her fornications, involved the whole Creation in such a woful bondage and thralldom, and made her self drunk with the blood of Saints and Martyrs of Jesus. Come boldly I say to the throne of Grace, and cry mightily to Heaven even day and night, and give the Lord no rest till he doth arise, & make his *Jerusalem* a praise in the earth, and fulfil all those glorious things which are spoken of that City of God, and execute all the judgements written against *Babylon*, to bind her Kings in chains, and her Nobles in links of Iron. This honour have all his Saints, *Heb. 4. 16. Luk 18. 7. Isa. 62, 6. 7. Psal.*

Psal the 87. 3. and *Psal*. 149. 7, 8, 9.

O ye Saints, this is an honour that the God of Heaven and Earth hath put upon you (by virtue of the anointing and unction of the holy one that is upon you) for that end to be the witnesses of Jesus Christ, *Rev.* 11. 3, 4, 5, 6. and to open and shut Heaven by your Prayers, and to smite the earth with plagues as often as ye will, to pray down the mighty Kingdom of *Babel* *Rev.* 11. 15. which is Antichrist, and to pray up the glorious and everlasting Kingdom of Jesus Christ; to pray out these old Heavens, and old earth, wherein dwelleth wickedness, and to pray in the new Heavens, and new Earth, wherein shall dwell righteousness and peace, 2 *Pet.* 3. 12, 13.

This is an honour, I say, which the God of Heaven and Earth hath put upon you, that ye should stand before the God of the whole earth, and be instrumental and influential in and about these great things. *Zech.* 4. 14.

And this honour can no man take from you; this is a Priviledge and Honour given you from Heaven, and 'tis not in the power of all the Devils in Hell by Tempting, nor all the powers of

of Earth by persecuting, to take it from you ; they may cast you into Prisons lay you in the darkeſt dungeons, drive you into exile and baniſhment, but ſtill where-ever you are, what-ever your outward condition be ; Heaven is open over your heads, and the ſpirit of grace is nigh your hearts, ye may have acceſs to the throne of grace, they cannot keep out the Spirit from you, nor ſhut out your prayers from aſcending before God ; if they will not ſuffer you to utter words, ye may pour out your ſpirits, and ſigh and groan inwardly and he who ſearcheth the heart knoweth what is the mind of the ſpirit, 1 *Sam.* 1. 13, 15. *Rom.* 8, 26, 27. I ſay ye may come freely & boldly to the throne of grace, the way is open, and none can ſhut it ; tis a new & a living way, not of works, but of grace ; not by the blood of Bulls and of Goats, but by the blood of Jeſus ; neither your ſins, nor your enemies therefore can ſhut it ; if it were an old Covenant way of acceſs by works, and mans righteouſneſs, your ſins might ſhut it, and you not be able to enter into the holieſt ; or if it were a way of acceſs by carnal and external Sacrifices, your Enemies might ſhut it, and make the daily ſacrifice

fice to cease, *Dan.* 8. 11. Either by denying you liberty, or wherewithall to sacrifice.

But now seeing it is a new Covenant way of access, not by works, and mans righteousness, but by free grace, and Gods righteousness imputed by Faith to them that believe not by external sacrifice, but by the blood and spirit of Jesus the Son of God; lift up your heads, and know that 'tis not in the power of your sins, or enemies, to hinder your daily access to the throne of grace; if you have Faith but as a grain of Mustard-seed, and come in the exercise of that Faith by the blood of Jesus, ye may ask and have, prevail with God by prayer for all things whatsoever; there is nothing too great, or too good for God to bestow upon you; he hath set you no bounds, but bids you ask what you will: *And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive.* Let me therefore close up this exhortation with the words of the holy Apostle, *Heb.* 10. 19, 20, 21, 22. *Having therefore boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the vail, that is to say, his flesh; and having an high Priest over the house of God:*
Let

Let us draw near with a true heart, and in full assurance of Faith: having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience.

Last Use. And to shut up all, O ye Israel of God, who as Princes have power with him thus to prevail in Heaven, that all things whatsoever ye ask in prayer believing ye are sure to receive; give all the glory unto Jesus Christ, and cast your crowns down at his feet, and give glory to the Lamb, through whom alone it is that ye thus overcome and prevail by Faith against all the powers of Hell and Earth.

Oh learn that new song, *Rev. 5. 9. Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof* (not we are worthy, but thou art worthy) to have honour, and glory, and blessing, and power: *As vers. 12, 13. for vers. 10. Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred, tongue, and People, and nation, and hast made us unto our God Kings and Priests.*

Oh know, and freely confess before Angels and men, that it is not by your own holiness, or righteousness, that ye do any of these great things; but by Faith in the name, the blessed and holy name of Jesus; let the same mind be in you, that was in the holy Apostles, *Peter and John*, who
when

when they had done a great work upon the impotent man (who was lame from his Mothers womb, which drew the eye of the People with great admiration towards them) did humble and abase themselves, that Christ alone might be magnified, and have all the glory of what they had done, directing the eye, and expectation of the People from them unto Jesus the Son of God, *Act. 3. 12. Ye men of Israel, why marvel ye at this? Or why look ye so earnestly on us? as though by our own power or holiness we had made this man to walk? The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God of our Fathers hath glorified his Son Jesus, whom ye delivered up, &c. And vers. His name, through Faith in his name hath made this man strong whom ye see and know. Yea the Faith which is by him, hath given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all.*

Oh here is a choice and excellent spirit indeed! here is the life and glory of Faith indeed! to do great things in the name and strength of Christ; and then to give all the glory back again to him!

Oh ye Saints and Servants of God, know that 'tis not by your own power and holiness, by your own Saintship and worthiness, but by the power and holiness, by the

the blood and righteousness, by the mediation and intercession of Jesus, that ye do any of these great things by Faith in prayer.

Therefore I say again and again, give all the glory to Jesus Christ; let nothing be given to faith, nothing be given to prayer, nothing be given or ascribed to your own Sainthood or holiness, but let all the glory be given to God, and to the Lamb, who is in the midst of the throne, but the holy Angels, the four beasts, and four and twenty Elders, with all the heavenly host, whose number is ten thousand times ten thousand, are all about the throne, not sharing the glory and honour with Jesus Christ, though they have been ministerially instrumentally in the hand of Christ to accomplish these great works; but giving all the glory to him, and to him alone, *Rev. 5. 11. 12, 13, 14. And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many Angels round about the throne, and the beasts and the Elders, and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands. Saying with a loud voice, worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power and riches and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing. And every creature*

creature which is in Heaven and on earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, blessing, honour glory, and Power, be unto him that sitteth upon the Throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever. And the four beasts and the four and twenty Elders fell down and worshiped him that liveth for ever and ever. Even so Amen.

And let all the Angels in Heaven, and all the Saints in Heaven and in Earth, and all creatures, Persons, and things be nothing, be less than nothing be over-shadowed and dis-appear, that Jesus Christ the Lamb of God may be all in all, and appear in his glory, and shine as the Sun of righteousness in the highest Heavens for ever and ever.

And let all the Saints and holy Angels, who are but stars, remember and know, that they shine but with a borrowed light, and therefore must disappear at the appearing of this glorious Sun, that all the world may behold his face in Righteousness, and the whole Earth be Enlightened with his glory.

Let him be true, and every man a Liar, Let him be holy, and every man a sinner; he must increase, but we must decrease.

And

And let every Saint and Servant of God say, let every friend of the Bridegroom say, *This my joy therefore is fulfilled*: for this is the great end of the Saints access unto, and acceptance with the Father through Jesus Christ. *Joh. 14. 13. And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.* If God and Jesus Christ be hereby glorified, we have our end, our all.

The summ, and scope, and perfection of all our Faith, and Hope of all our Praying, Preaching, Hearing, Reading, Doing, and Suffering, is this, *That he may be glorified, Isa. 61. 3.*

In this therefore let us joy and rejoyce, in this let our souls acquiesce, and take up, as in our Spiritual center and Heavenly rest; as in our *Canaan*, our Heaven, our all, which is dearer and sweeter to us than our Reputations, Estates, Liberties, Lives, yea than our very Souls, than all our own Concernments. That Jesus Christ, and the Father in him is glorified and Exalted by the great things that he doth and will do in Heaven, for his poor sinful, and unworthy, tempted, and

and afflicted Servants here on Earth.
*Hebbrews 13. 7, 8. Considering the
end of their conversation Jesus Christ, the
same yesterday, and to day, and for ever.*

 **FINIS.**

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